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THE NEW EDITION

WITH A NEW PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

LONDON:

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**MATRIMONIAL
SPECULATIONS.**

**BY MRS. MOODIE,
AUTHOR OF "ROUGHING IT IN THE BUSH,"
ETC.**

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1854.**

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Matrimonial Speculations.

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WAITING FOR DEAD MEN'S SHOES.

CHAPTER I.

A BEGINNING OF SOME SORT—GOOD NEWS.

"HARK, girls! there's the postman's horn!" cried Mrs. Harford, rising from the breakfast-table, and hurrying to the window. "Run to the garden-gate, Rosamond, and see if he brings us a letter from your mother."

Away flew Rosamond, knocking over the music-stool in her speed, whilst her widowed mother watched her movements from the open window in breathless expectation.

The hand was held up—the letter received; and Mrs. Harford sank down in her chair with an air of deep disappointment, when, instead of returning with the same haste, Rosamond stepped behind a clump of shrubs, in front of the window, and opened the letter. "Provoking," muttered Caroline Harford, stooping down and raising up the insulted music-stool, in order to conceal her chagrin. "The letter is from one of Rosamond's numerous correspondents. Surely letter-writing is the vice of some young people. I wish, mamma, that you would put a stop to Rosamond's expensive propensities."

"I have often spoken to her about it, Caroline; but Rose is such an impetuous, irritable creature, that my lectures produced anything but a beneficial effect. She loves letter-writing. She excels in it. Her friends delight in her correspondence, and if I put a stop to it she will practise it in secret. No, no, let her alone; it is a rational and innocent amusement. Her friends are well known to us; I am sure we have nothing to fear."

"The expense—think of *that*, mamma, in our circumstances. Besides encouraging an idle gossiping habit. Rosamond has no prudence. This is a dangerous method she has of promulgating her opinions on others, to persons, of whose private characters she knows little; and in whom, unfortunately, she reposes the most unlimited confidence. Have you forgotten the picture she drew of Uncle Beaumont, and his stingy housekeeper, to Rachel Dale?"

"It was a capital portrait," said Mrs. Harford, laughing.

"Mamma, I wonder at you; it was so true to the life, that Rachel must read it as a capital joke to her aunt Martha, who wished to gain the good graces of the rector, and she repeated it to the old man—and you know the result. He has looked upon us as aliens ever since. This comes of suffering a young girl, like Rosamond, to indulge in scribbling letters."

"It was a pity, Caroline, but cannot be helped now. You have told me of this a thousand times and scolded poor Rose about it so often, that she is quite hardened in her fault. But see, something in her letter pleases her. She looks up with a smiling face, and comes running towards us. Well, Rosy, what news?"

"Good, good! joyful news! 'Tis from dear George

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Read it, mamma—read it, Caroline. It was so kind of him to write to me, that I might be the communicator of that, which he knew would give us all so much pleasure." And the giddy girl put the letter into her mother's hands, with glowing cheeks and eyes sparkling with gladness. Then anticipating the contents, she ran on—"He is not going to India. He has been dangerously ill, and is permitted to retire upon half-pay. He writes from London, and will be with us to-night, or to-morrow morning, at farthest."

"This is indeed good news. Thank God, I shall see my dear boy again."

"Oh, we shall be so happy!" cried the volatile Rose. "We shall be able to take such nice walks, and make such delightful picnic parties to the sea-shore. He will go and put his chamber in order, and make everything neat and comfortable."

"I hope you will finish pouring out the tea first," said Caroline, drily. "You and my mother seem to forget, in your selfish excess of joy, that this returning upon half-pay, will put a stop to my brother's promotion."

"And you would have him go to the East Indies?" exclaimed the mother and youngest daughter, in a breath.

"Yes, certainly, it is the surest road to wealth and preferment."

"And we should never see him again?"

"That does not follow. Ten years are soon passed."

"Caroline, who is selfish now?—we should be old women; perhaps old maids, before he came back, and dear mamma in her grave."

"Very likely; but if it is my brother's welfare you seek, all these circumstances would be of minor consideration."

"Well, you are a strange girl, Caroline."

"And you a very inconsistent, thoughtless one, Rosamond. But I would thank you to hand me my tea, which by this time must be nearly cold."

"Dear me! how cross you are, Caroline," said Rose, pushing the cup across the table: "I forgot everything in the joy of my dear brother's return. I hate your cold, phlegmatic people, who receive good and bad news with the same philosophical indifference. You always throw cold water upon everything which gives me pleasure."

"I say less, Rosamond, but perhaps feel more."

"Have done with this unpleasant bickering, girls," said Mrs. Harford, giving the letter she had just finished reading to Caroline. "It is strange that you two can never agree."

Poor Rosamond, under the excitement, did and said a thousand extravagant things. She emptied half the contents of the cream-jug into Mrs. Harford's cup, who took no milk in her tea; and put three lumps of sugar into her sister's cup who made a merit of drinking hers without; and dropped some scalding water out of the tea-kettle upon her favourite lap-dog's tail. Dire were the yells of the injured Crusty, severe the reproof of the prudent Caroline, and loud the laughter of the presiding genius of the tea-table; and, in the midst of this confusion, I will endeavour to give my readers a more definite account of the parties thus abruptly introduced to their notice.

Mrs. Harford was the widow of a captain in the army. Captain Harford belonged to a good family, but unfortunately was the youngest son of a numerous progeny. Fortune he had none, beyond what he derived from his profession. He married early in life, a pretty accomplished girl, exactly circumstanced like

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himself. They possessed a great deal of love for each other, but very scanty means to render themselves comfortable, and maintain a respectable appearance in the world. Three children were the fruit of this union. Captain Harford was killed in the memorable battle of Waterloo, and his widow retired, with her small young family, to a little village on the coast, with no other income than the pension she derived from the untimely death of the man she loved. Here, with the assistance of a rich uncle of Mrs. Harford's, doctor of Divinity and rector of the parish, she educated her son and two young daughters; depriving herself of every luxury, in order to give them the fashionable accomplishments of the day.

When George quitted school, the old man presented him with a commission in the army; and, to the great regret of his mother and sisters, the regiment to which he was attached, was ordered to the West Indies. There he remained several years, duly keeping up a formal correspondence with his great uncle and benefactor; and on his return to England, had paid him as much attention as he could consistently, without compromising his independence or degenerating into a sneak.

The old man was proud of his nephew, and, left himself would have felt no hesitation in making him his heir; but he had two great faults—he was very susceptible of ridicule, and a slave to his appetite. A good dinner to him was the greatest of all terrestrial enjoyments. The dainties to be provided for his table engaged his first and last waking thoughts; and even whilst reclining in his easy chair, after having eaten more than prudence warranted, in order to doze away the inconvenient oppression of head and stomach occasioned by reple-

tion, his very dreams transported him to markets well stocked with fish, flesh, and fowl, so that, whether sleeping or waking, his mind was occupied with this one engrossing subject.

"Eating," he had been known to say, "was the greatest of all human enjoyments, seeing that it could be renewed the oftenest, and continued the longest." Alas for man's fallen nature! Could it experience a greater degradation than this?

Pity, that while the march of improvement is going on at such a rate in the world, there are no Anti-Gluttony Societies! The man that maddens himself with drink is not more disgusting in the mode which he takes to follow out his animal propensities, than the monster of obesity that darkens his intellect, and sinks into a stupid state of idiocy, from constant repletion.

Unfortunately for such men, all their dependent relations, in hopes of winning their favour, help to pander to their vices; and presents of dainties flow in from all quarters. Even George Harford had not been above practising this stale policy. He had brought his uncle, as a present, a splendid turtle from the fragrant islands of the West; and the old epicure long retained a grateful recollection of this welcome offering.

"It was good, *decidedly good*," he would exclaim, rubbing his hands emphatically together. "And it was very considerate of George to remember his uncle's taste. He could not forget it; nay, he did not mean to forget it, he could assure him."

George Harford remained but a few weeks at his mother's residence, when his regiment was ordered to Ireland, and shortly after to the East Indies.

Since this last order, Mrs. Harford had received

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no letter from her son, although more than a month had elapsed since he had made this unwelcome communication; and she supposed that he had already sailed, and had deferred writing to his sorrowing friends, until the certainty of their long, and perhaps eternal separation, had been fixed beyond a doubt.

The joy that the receipt of his letter gave to all but Caroline, (who thought that it would have been more for her brother's interest to proceed to India,) may easily be imagined.

Mrs. Harford and Rosamond could talk of nothing but Lieutenant Harford's return; and before the sun went down that evening, the whole village was acquainted with the fact.

"I wonder what George will think of the coolness which has taken place between Uncle Beaumont and us, in consequence of Rosamond's foolish letter," said Caroline.

"Pray don't tell him," said Rose, colouring up.

"He must know it. It was a foolish business. I wonder that you had not more sense. It will entirely put a stop to poor George and Ellen's marriage; for you know, that unless uncle left us his property, it would be impossible for my brother to make a wife."

"I did not think of all this," said the penitent Rose; "I only meant to make Rachel laugh, and he must go and show it to that ugly, ill-natured old maid, Martha Sadler. I have a great mind to go and beg uncle's pardon; and entreat him not to lay the blame of my misconduct upon the rest of the family."

"You would only make bad worse; and Mrs. Drums, whose character you sketched so admirably,

would be sure to place your submission in the most unfavourable light."

"Ah, but I would take that fine kit of oysters that Ellen sent us this morning; surely, if he would not listen to me, the oysters would be irresistible."

"They would open their mouths to no purpose, Rose. Mrs. Oram's star is in the ascendant; and all your explanations, apologies, and regrets, would be in vain. I should not wonder if the Doctor was to marry her out of spite."

"Impossible!" exclaimed both ladies in a breath; "Caroline, you say these provoking things on purpose to vex us."

"We shall see," said Caroline, thoughtfully.

"He is too proud to act so foolishly," said Rose.

"A confirmed old bachelor," said her mother.

"A superannuated *gourmand*," replied Caroline, "with whom all absurd things are possible; whose god is his belly, and Mrs. Orams his officiating priestess. The thing appears to me as clear as daylight."

"But do you *really* think, Caroline, that uncle will never forgive me, for writing that foolish letter?"

"Has he admitted you into his august presence since?"

"True; but he has had the gout, and he never sees any one during those fits."

"Depend upon it, Rose, that he has not only shut his door against us, but has added a new codicil to his will. I don't know what effect my brother's return may have upon him. But, at any rate, you have marred your own fortune."

"I don't care for myself," said Rose, sullenly; "I can live without his money."

"More comfortably with it, I should think, seeing that you are not likely to have any of your own."

"But I may marry a rich husband," said Rose, glancing with peculiar satisfaction at her own lovely person in the mirror.

"More likely to do that with uncle's fat legacy, than without it. There are plenty of pretty girls single now-a-days," sighed the provoking Caroline; who, very pretty herself, had never up to this moment received an offer of marriage.

"Rose, Rose, yours is a desperate case!"

"I don't care," said Rose, bursting into tears; and so the conversation ended.

CHAPTER II.

OF ALL FOOLS OLD FOOLS ARE THE WORST.

"So my nephew's returned?" said Dr. Beaumont, taking off his spectacles, and laying down the book he had been reading. "What will *he* do at home?"

This remark was addressed, as most of his remarks were, to a stout, rosy, matronly-looking woman of fifty, who was seated upon the opposite side of the table, knitting, who acted in the double capacity of companion and housekeeper to the reverend gentleman.

"Humph!" responded Mrs. Orams, without raising her eyes from her work; "Do?—he will do what most young people do in his circumstances; cut a dash as long as his money lasts, and when it is all gone, depend upon his wealthy relations to pay his debts."

"He is an extravagant dog, but I cannot think so harshly of poor George. No, no, Mary Orams, the half-pay of a lieutenant in the army is but a trifle—a mere trifle—I must allow him *something* yearly to keep up his place in society."

This was said in a hesitating under-tone, and with a timid glance at the housekeeper, whose countenance, now pale, now red, betrayed considerable agitation.

"Oh! your Reverence may do as you please with your money; but I am sure, if I were in *your* place, I would never deprive myself of my little comforts

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to encourage a young man in his idle, expensive habits, particularly after the shameful treatment I had received from his family."

"Phoo! nonsense! the poor lad had nothing to do with that; it was only that pert minx, Rose—a school-girl's trick. I am ashamed of having shown so much resentment about it. I believe the other members of the family were ignorant of the whole affair."

"Very likely that," returned Mrs. Orams; "the poor ignorant creatures! they never called your Reverence, old fiddle-D.-D. and ridiculed you for your portly appearance, and love of the creature comforts, as Miss Rosamond was pleased to term good mutton and beef. And then, as to poor *me*—but that's of no consequence. I am but a poor faithful servant, and this little boarding-school Miss may abuse me as she likes. It is hardly likely that my master would take my part."

"It was too bad, Mrs. Orams, too bad," said the good Doctor, shaking his head; "but what has George to do with all this? If I withdraw my support from the poor lad, what will become of him?"

"If his half-pay is not enough to support him, let him do as many better men have done before him—enter the Spanish service. This is what my own brother's son did last year, and that's how I come to know about it."

"It's a hard alternative," said the compassionate and doubting Doctor.

"Not at all, sir," returned the crafty Mrs. Orams; "he is a fine young man, let him try his fortune in matrimony, and look out for a rich wife."

"Nonsense!" muttered the Doctor, whilst a frown drew his bushy eyebrows so closely together,

that they formed a shaggy line across his wrinkled forehead. "The boy would never be so absurd; in his circumstances, 'twould be madness! Pshaw! he is too sensible to think of such a thing."

"But young people will think of such things," said Mrs. Orams, frowning in her turn; for well she knew the Doctor's aversion to matrimony.

"And *old* people, too," said the Doctor, with a bitter smile, "in which they show their lack of wisdom."

"Lord bless us! sir, I hope you don't mean to turn us all into monks and nuns. If you mean me, by *people*, I can tell you, that I am not an old woman. I have a young notion yet, and it's my own fault that I am single. The foolish respect that I retain for your Reverence," she added, adroitly applying her handkerchief to her eyes, "has kept away many suitors. Since I have been in this house, I have rejected no less than seven good offers. But, Mary Orams, says I, it is better for you to remain single, and enjoy the company and conversation of a clever man, and contribute to his domestic comfort, than have a house of your own."

"You were a wise woman, Mary Orams," said the Doctor, greatly softened by this piece of well-directed flattery, "and I am not ungrateful for your kindness, as time will show," and he nodded significantly. "A married life, Mrs. Orams, has many cares. We are free from them. Our rest is unbroken by squalling children and nocturnal lectures. You may bless God that you are what you are."

"Indeed, Doctor Beaumont," said Mary, in a sulky tone, "I never trouble the Almighty with blessing him for such small mercies; and since you are on the subject of matrimony, I think it but right

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to inform you, that I have received an offer of marriage just now; and, to convince you that I am neither old, ugly, nor despised, I think I shall accept it."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Orams?" said the astonished old bachelor, sinking back in his easy chair, and staring the housekeeper full in the face.

"I mean what I say—to marry."

"You are not in earnest?"

"Never was more so, in my life."

"A woman of your years, Mrs. Orams?"

"Pray, sir, do not mention my years."

"Oh, I forgot—'tis a tender subject. But what in the world can induce *you* to marry?"

"I wish to change my condition—that's all."

"Are you not comfortable here?"

"Why—yes—tolerably comfortable. But one gets tired of the same thing for ever. You remember the story you told me of the Bishop and the Partridge, when I gave you turkey for dinner two days running. I am something like the bishop, I want change. Besides, I don't want to be despised."

"Despised! Who despises *you*?"

"Your niece, and her daughters!"

"That foolish story again?"

"Oh, you may think lightly of such things, your Reverence, but I do not; I can see as far into a millstone as another. The whole family is jealous of me. Yes, jealous of the good opinion your Reverence entertains for his poor servant. There is not one of them who will speak a civil word to me; and this one Mr. George, that you are so fond of, the last time he was at home, had the impudence to call me TOADY to my face! Yes, me—a respectable decent

woman, like me! He might as well have called me a bad woman at once! I have been insulted and ill-treated by the whole family; and rather than be thought to stand in their way—which your Reverence well knows, is not the case,”—here Mrs. Orams cast a shrewd glance at the alarmed old man, to see what effect her long harangue had produced upon him,—“I will marry, and leave you; and then, you know, sir, I shall no longer be a servant, but have a house of my own.”

“And who is to be your husband?”

“A man as well off as your Reverence,” said Mary, simpering and looking down into her capacious lap, “and a great many years younger,—Mr. Archer, Squire Talbot’s steward. He sits in the front pew, just fronting the pulpit.”

“I know the man.”

“I am sure your Reverence can have no objection to the match. Archer’s a regular church-goer; and never falls asleep in the midst of your sermons, as the rest of the farmers do. ’Tis true, that although at least ten years younger than your Reverence, he is an old man; but what of that? Who can attend so well to an old man’s comforts, as his wife? What hireling can take such an interest in his welfare—in his domestic comforts? Grey hairs are honourable, and he has plenty of money to buy a wig.”

Doctor Beaumont groaned aloud during Mary’s eloquent description of the advantages to be derived from the Archer connexion, which in fact were all imaginary; for the man had never spoken ten words to her in his life; and he stopped the torrent of loquacity, by exclaiming, in mournful tones,—“What am I to do, when you are gone, Mrs. Orams?” for he perceived, with no small degree of alarm, that the

Fair was likely to prove more serious than he had first imagined.

"Do, sir? Oh! la, there's plenty to be had in my place."

"Ah, Mrs. Orams, for the last twenty years I have depended solely upon you, for all my little comforts—"

"Dear, dear, surely 'tis not more than ten?"

"Twenty, Mrs. Orams, twenty long years you have been the mistress of this house. What can you desire more? Nothing has been withheld from you; your salary is ample; but if you think it less than your services merit, I will make an addition of ten pounds per annum. I will do anything—make any sacrifice, however painful to my feelings, rather than part from you. Name your own terms."

Mrs. Orams leaned her head sentimentally upon her fat red hand, and affected an air of deep consideration.

"I see, the idea of leaving me distresses you?"

"True, sir," whined forth Mrs. Orams; "but I cannot lose such an excellent opportunity of bettering my condition."

"But who will cook for me?" exclaimed the doctor, in an agony of despair.

"Money will procure good cooks," said the in-praise housekeeper.

"And nurse me, when I have the gout?"

"Money will buy attendance."

"It is but a joke!" cried the old bachelor, brightening up. "The thing is impossible; you cannot give the heart to leave me."

"Bless me, Doctor Beaumont!" said Mary, bustling from her seat; "I am tired of leading a lonely life. Mr. Archer has offered me a comfortable home, and

I see no prospect of a better. To-morrow, if you please, we will settle our accounts."

She sailed out of the room, and the old man sank back in his chair and fell into a profound reverie.

For twenty years Mrs. Orams had humoured the Doctor, and treated him as a spoiled child, attended to all his whims, and pampered his appetite, in the hope of inducing him to repay her *disinterested* services, by making her his wife. But if the housekeeper was ambitious, the old parson was proud. He saw through her little manœuvres, and secretly laughed at them. The idea of making an uneducated woman, like Mary Orams, his wife, was too ridiculous; and not wholly dead to affection, the indolent self-indulgent divine, looked upon his widowed niece, her promising son and pretty daughters, as his future heirs.

These benevolent intentions had received a severe shock from the imprudent ridicule of the thoughtless Rosamond. The old Doctor, in order to give them a useful lesson for the future, had ordered the servants to deny him to their repeated calls. Mrs. Harford had felt offended in her turn; and as intercourse had, for some weeks, ceased between the families.

Their presence had always been a salutary restraint upon the encroachments of the avaricious housekeeper. Her master was now left entirely to her mercy, and she determined to make one bold effort to secure the advantage she had gained.

What weak mind can long struggle against the force of habit? Step by step Mrs. Orams insinuated herself into her master's favour, and made herself so subservient to his comforts, that he felt wretched

row, if you without her. Year after year, she had threatened leave him, in the hope of drawing him into making an offer of his hand. Matrimony was the Doctor's version. It was a dish in no way agreeable to his taste; and year after year he increased her salary, to induce her to remain in his service. This only stimulated her avarice to enlarge its sphere of action. He was rich, and old, and infirm, why might she not enjoy the whole of his fortune, as well as a part? And she lost no opportunity of weakening the hold the Harfords had upon his heart. She hated them, for they were his natural heirs, were pretty, and genteel, and young, and disdained to flatter her in order to secure their uncle's property. The sudden return of the lieutenant Harford frightened her. He was, in spite of all her lies and mischief-making, a great favourite with the old man. Mary Orams knew this, and determined to be beforehand with him; and she was resolved to make one desperate effort upon the hand of the old man, and, in case of failure, to abandon house and service for ever.

Two hours had elapsed since she quitted the room; but the Doctor remained in the same attitude,—his head thrown back, and his hands folded over his portly stomach. At length, with a desperate effort, he leaned forward and rang the bell. The footman answered the hasty summons.

"Anything wanted, sir?"

"Joseph, send up Mrs. Orams."

A few minutes elapsed; the Doctor thought them long. The handle of the door slowly turned, and the comely person of Mrs. Orams projected itself into the room, her broad face flushed to a fiery red, and leaning over the kitchen fire.

"Dinner will be ready, sir, in half an hour. If I

leave the kitchen just now, that careless hussy, Sally, will be sure to burn the meat."

"Let it burn!" quoth the Doctor, with an air of ridiculous solemnity.

Mrs. Orams looked hard at the Doctor; she thought the learned gentleman had lost his senses.

"La, sir, I hope your Reverence is not ill?"

"Not ill, Mrs. Orams, but only a little QUEERISH. Sit down, I have something to say to you."

"Surely he is not in his right senses," thought Mrs. Orams, as she took a seat. The Doctor drew quite close up to her, and screwing his courage to the pinch, said, in a hurried tone—

"You leave me to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you wish to be married?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you any objections to marry me?"

"Oh la, sir! not in the least," replied the delighted housekeeper, rising, and making a low curtsy.

"Then I will marry you myself, Mary; for, to tell you the plain truth, I cannot live without you. Now, go and send up the dinner."

Mrs. Orams curtsied still lower, and with eyes sparkling with triumph, left the room in compliance with her future lord's command, without uttering a word. What would the Harfords say to this?—avarice, revenge, and pride, were alike gratified.

CHAPTER III.

MORE MATRIMONIAL SPECULATIONS.

You have grown very sentimental of late, Edward. Now do be honest for once in your life, and confess that you are really in love," said Clement Cotterel to his young friend Edward Freeburn, as they sat chatting over their own affairs, in Mr. Burnham's office (who happened to be the only lawyer in C——,) instead of attending to their master's business.

"In love with whom, I should like to know?" returned the other idler, cutting to pieces a new pen which he had just finished mending. "Let me tell you, Ned, there are few girls in this town on whom I should bestow a second thought."

"Now, don't attempt to deny the fact, nor lay such a stress upon the personal pronoun; it looks very suspicious, Ned. I heard last night, from Frank Townsend, that you are actually engaged to pretty Miss Samond Harford, and, by Jove! I thought you a very fortunate dog. You need not be ashamed of your choice, for I am more than half in love with her myself."

"Indeed! Well, I must confess she is pretty, and that I would have no objection to the match; but as to any engagement existing between us, I was not such a fool as to commit myself so far, without knowing how the old Doctor would leave his money."

Rose is a handsome girl, but unless she brings with her a handsome fortune, she is no wife for me."

"I did not think you were so mercenary."

"Mercenary! 'tis only common prudence. I have read a great deal about love in a cottage, but I never saw it reduced to practice; and I have no idea of sacrificing myself by making the experiment for the public good."

"And upon what footing do you stand with Rose?"

"Oh, the best in the world. Of course, I don't let her into the secret that I have an eye to her cash; women always expect to be loved for themselves. Yes, let them be ever so old and ugly, they always imagine that it is their person, not their money, that you pay your addresses to."

"But how is it possible for you to view such a lovely creature as Rosamond Harford with such philosophical indifference?"

"You misunderstand me, Clement. I love and admire Rose, but I would not marry her without a penny."

"Then you do not deserve to possess such a treasure, if she had a fortune."

"Oh, that's all very fine in a romance, and very selfish, too; but I hate romances of every kind, and above all, the romance of real life. Give me plain common sense, which provides for the future without compromising the present. I have no fortune of my own, and I am not one fond of drudging to obtain one. God has given me a tolerably fine person, and I am willing to give it in exchange for the competency I require. Can anything be more reasonable?"

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"I hope she will be rich Rose."

"I should rejoice to hear that the old Doctor died without leaving her a farthing."

"Then I can tell you that our courtship would be short."

"The shorter the better, for I would woo and win her myself."

"Hold! that would not be fair."

"Perfectly. You said Rose Harford without a fortune would be no wife for you."

"Yes; but I did not mean to resign my claims to you."

"Claims! I do not perceive that you have any in her person; and I am certain that a high-spirited girl like Rose would spurn the idea of being married for her fortune. You should go and pay your addresses to the old Doctor at once. Perhaps he might be induced to leave you a legacy."

"It would be labour in vain, while Mary Orams guards the golden fruit."

"I guess it would be, as the Yankees say," returned Clement, laughing. "But enough of matrimonial speculations; here comes Mr. Burnham. To your desk, rebellious son of the quill, and make out the best apology you can frame for your idleness."

These young men were the sons of respectable women in the neighbourhood, who, in order to make their first-born gentlemen, had, at a great sacrifice of comfort and means, articulated them to Mr. Burnham, to acquire the legal profession.

Edward Freeburn was handsome and intelligent, and possessed a frank easy manner, which obtained for him a popularity which he did not really deserve. From his father, a close, avaricious, uneducated tiller of the soil, he had contracted mean and sordid notions

of the omnipotence of wealth, and was prepared to make any sacrifice in order to obtain it. Naturally of an indolent disposition, he thought the easiest way to become rich was to make a grand matrimonial speculation, and look out for some wealthy young heiress, who would be willing to barter fortune for a husband who possessed a genteel profession and a fine person. With plenty of assurance, aided by the most exalted notions of his own importance, he had forced himself into the first society in the place, and had become a general favourite. It was at Mrs. Burnham's tea-table he was first introduced to the Misses Harford, and struck with the beauty of Rose, he had eagerly inquired,

"Who is she, and what fortune will she have?"

The answer was not *quite* satisfactory. He was told, that if the young lady had no fortune of her own, she had great *expectations*. That in all probability she would inherit a large portion of her uncle's wealth. This was enough to stimulate the young man's avarice, and induce him to pay most devoted attention to a girl whose lovely face and agreeable manners had charmed his fancy.

A pure and disinterested affection could never emanate from such a heart as Edward Freeburn. He was incapable of forming such for the most amiable object; and still less capable of appreciating it in another. Yet, alas! how many lovely and accomplished girls shipwreck their happiness, by bringing the first pure offerings of a guileless heart, to present in fond idolatry at such an empty shrine.

Just at that early stage of womanhood, when the natural feelings are too apt to hold the reason captive at their will, Rosamond had met Edward Freeburn; and, charmed by the graces of his person

lively conversation, and above all, by his insidious and devoted attentions to herself, she had formed for him a strong attachment, and wrapped herself up in the blissful dream, that she was beloved by the only person whose love she wished to gain.

This delicious secret she had carefully hidden in the depths of her own breast. Edward, though a lover, and her lover, had never declared his passion, asked her for her hand; and Rosamond was too proud to boast of a lover who had given her no claim to consider him such.

Caroline more than suspected the fact. Unprejudiced by any tender partiality, she saw at once into Edward Freeburn's character, and she let no opportunity slip of declaring her opinion, in the hope of diverting her volatile sister from fixing her affections upon such an unworthy object.

This injudicious conduct produced the opposite effect upon a warm-hearted girl like Rosamond. She received Caroline's sarcastic remarks upon Edward with insults and injuries; and to this cause might be traced the constant bickerings, and the want of concord between the sisters. With the best intentions in the world, Caroline, by her mistimed animadversions, was hourly wounding the feelings of the amiable Rose, and her mother, unacquainted with the cause of their quarrels, wondered, as well she might, what was the matter with the girls.

Clement Cotterel was a plain, sensible, unobtrusive young man, the very reverse of Edward Freeburn. Modest and retiring in his demeanour, he demanded no attention from no one; and was better pleased to be an observer than a leader in conversation. He was well read and accomplished, with a mind keenly alive to the beauties of nature and art; a poet in theory

and practice, possessing all those refined feelings, and that enthusiasm which constitutes the essence of poetry. He loved Rosamond Harford, because he discovered under her lively manners and happy exterior, sentiments and feelings in unison with his own.

Clement was the son of worthy parents, who had bestowed much pains and labour on the tuition of their children. They held but a humble position in society, but their worth was well known, and appreciated in circles far above them.

Old Mr. Cotterel, though a yeoman, was a man of good property, and was able to settle his children comfortably in life, without interfering with his own homestead; and finding Clement possessed of good abilities, he had determined to make a gentleman of him, by bestowing upon him a liberal profession.

Clement was happy at home; and so alive to the beauties of nature, that it was with regret he left his rural employments, in obedience to his father's wishes, and commenced his legal studies. But having once entered upon the path chalked out for him, he pursued it with diligence and alacrity; and his employers prophesied that he would rise to eminence in his profession.

Such were the two young men whom Rosamond had inspired with the tender passion. One from modesty had never breathed a word of his affection to the object of it; the other, from the most base and sordid motives, had given her to understand by a thousand unequivocal looks and signs, that he loved her; but withheld the positive and legal announcement of the fact, until the death of her old uncle should determine whether she was a bride worth having.

CHAPTER IV.

HIGH SHOWETH THE FOLLY OF WAITING FOR DEAD MEN'S SHOES.

Early next morning—so early, that most of the inhabitants of the village were still in their beds—Doctor Beaumont stepped out of his back door, and entered the churchyard, which adjoined his premises, through the garden gate. He was followed by Mrs. Beaumont, in a new silk gown, and a straw bonnet, trimmed with cherry-coloured ribbons, which she had kept up all night to trim. There was nothing bride-like or simple in her appearance. Her face wore a sure, self-complacent smirk, which she tried to control, by keeping her eyes fixed upon her new pecco shoes, and mincing as she walked. Sally, the maid, brought up the rear, in all her Sunday dress, laughing in her sleeve; and taking off the admirable couple, first imitating the hobbling gait of the Doctor, then the affected airs of the other; and waiting for the opportunity to divulge the mighty secret, with which she had only a moment before been entrusted.

The Doctor, poor man, looked as if he had committed a capital offence, and was anxious to conceal himself from public observation; and Sally observed her friend afterwards—"That master sighed as if his heart would break, and his hand trembled, as if he had a fit of the palsy, when he opened the church door. To be sure it was all up with him then. He

looked like a lamb going to the slaughter, and Mrs. Orams as if she was sharpening the knife for the butcher. And then Mr. Rolland the curate did stare so at the bride, and smile so roguish to himself, as if he thought the grey mare would be the better horse; that Sally could scarcely keep from laughing out before them all."

But repentance—if, indeed, he did repent of his folly—came too late. The fatal knot was tied, and the happy bride and bridegroom returned by the same private road—the latter, to doze away the tedious day in his arm-chair; the former, to take possession of the house, and overhaul all her husband's private treasures, which she now considered her own.

The sun was sinking beneath the waves on the evening of the same day, when two merry, laughing girls were seen pacing to and fro, along the road which fronted Mrs. Harford's pretty lawn and cottage, equally looking for the arrival of the London mail which nightly passed their dwelling.

"I expected him last night," said Rose to her companion; "but he will certainly be here this evening, Ellen, as you are here to welcome him."

"Perhaps not!" said Ellen Talfourd, with a low sigh, that told more than words, the state of her mind. "I dare not hope to see him so soon."

"Then he will be sure to come," said Rose. "Whenever I anticipate an event as certain, the I am sure to be disappointed; but when I doubt and fear, I am always agreeably surprised by the realization of that, which I dreaded would never take place."

"I wish your theory may prove true in my case, dear Rose. I love George, and I know that

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loves me; but I fear that circumstances may prevent our union. Had your brother chosen any other profession but the army, time and industry would have made him independent. But, Rose, this old uncle of yours may live for many years, and I hate waiting for dead men's shoes."

Rose blushed deeply,—she knew too well upon what a footing her imprudent letter had placed the family with her uncle; and she half determined to make a confidant of Ellen, and tell her all about it.

"You seem thoughtful, Rose?"

"Yes: I was thinking upon a subject that has given me much pain, which, indeed, concerns us all."

"The mail is coming!" cried Ellen, retreating within the lawn, and interrupting Rose in her premeditated confession. "I hear it descending the hill. I dare not go forward to meet it, for fear he should not be there; and then the passengers would laugh at my disappointment. Run, dear Rose,—you are not his sweetheart, they will not laugh at you." And poor Ellen bowed her sweet flushing face upon her hands, as she leaned upon the gate to listen to the sound of the wheels; but the beating of her heart prevented her from hearing them. The coach whirled rapidly on.—It stopped.—Ellen scarcely breathed. There was a joyful greeting, but she did not hear it, until the coach dashed on, and a manly arm encircled her slender figure, and a manly voice whispered in her ear,—

"My Ellen—not one smile?"

Then were the tearful eyes raised, swimming withapture; and the white arms clasped about the beloved neck; and the whispered welcome kissed away before it was spoken; and the happy three returned, all too happy to speak, to the house, where the kind

mother and more sober sister awaited the smiling group in the doorway; and Ellen ran away with Rose, to hide her tears and smiles in the solitude of Rosamond's chamber, while the son answered all the anxious inquiries of the fond mother and sage Caroline.

"And how is dear old uncle?" said George Harford, when they all reassembled at the tea-table. "I have brought for him a fine fresh salmon and a rich pine-apple, which was given me by a brother officer, who had just returned from the West Indies. I wish, Rosy, you would send them across by Betty, with my compliments."

"Do, dear Rose; who knows but this timely present may prove a peace-offering."

"A peace-offering?" reiterated George. "I hope that you have not affronted the old gentleman during my absence, or what will become of Nell and me?"

"You must trust to your own resources," said Caroline, cheerfully, "and less to the capricious will of another. I believe that it will prove the best thing that ever happened to us,—this quarrel with uncle, if we use it aright."

"Caroline is such a philosopher," returned George, "that she would rather toil for a shilling, than enjoy the benefits it confers gratis. I am not one of the operatives,—I hate trouble."

"And I hate dependence," said Caroline, pointedly; "I have serious thoughts of attempting to earn my own living."

"In what way?" said George, with a frown.

"As a governess."

"A very *independent* situation, that, Caroline."

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tainly in the other. I should have to suffer doubtless from the restraint which all endure, who have to submit their own to the will of another. But no situation in life is exempt from care and anxiety; while in the steady performance of duty, I should feel a proud consciousness of acting right, and the satisfaction of assisting my dear mother, and supporting myself."

"Yes, this is all very well, but you should consider the respectability of the family. I should not like it to be said, that I had a sister a governess."

"But, George, I should not attend to your foolish scruples. I don't expect a fortune from my uncle, and I must provide for old age in the season of youth."

"Phoo! such a pretty girl," said George, glancing at her with some degree of pride; "you will certainly marry?"

"I am very particular," returned Caroline, gravely; "I have seen few men with whom I could spend my life; and without I am fortunate enough to meet with a kindred spirit I shall be happiest single. I hate *matrimonial speculations*: they fill the world with sorrow and misery — with worldly, godless parents, and disobedient unnatural children."

At this moment Rosamond rushed into the room. She held up her hands, but was too much excited to speak.

"What is the matter, Rose?" asked Mrs. Harford, in alarm. "Is your uncle dead?"

"Not dead," said Rosamond, sinking into a chair, and bursting into an uncontrollable fit of laughter; "but married! Yes, married to old Polly Orams, — ha! ha! ha!"

"Impossible! You are joking, Rose."

"Quite serious, mamma. It is true, indeed it is; he was married at six o'clock this morning, by Mr. Rolland, the curate. I had it from Sally, who was the old creature's bridesmaid, and one of the witnesses—Mrs. Beaumont, my worshipful aunt. Ha! ha! ha! I cannot help laughing when I think of it. That fine salmon too, it will furnish the bridal supper.—Ha! ha! ha!"

In spite of Rosamond's ill-timed mirth, there were blank faces and significant looks, which passed between the more reflective part of the company; and even sage Caroline, with all her good resolutions and philosophical resignation, appeared a *little* touched at the mortifying intelligence.

"It is nothing to laugh at, Rosamond," said George, sternly. "This is the result of your folly. Ellen, alas! for us."

Ellen looked down with tears in her eyes, and said nothing; but she thought, that if this untoward event affected Rose, as it did her, she would be the last to laugh at it. She almost felt inclined to dislike Rose, for her levity.

Poor Rose, the thing was so unlooked-for, so ridiculous, that she could not restrain her inclination to mirth; but she made one effort to excuse herself.

"Well, good folks, don't lay all the blame upon me; for I feel convinced that uncle would have married Mrs. Orams, had we continued to flatter him and present him with fat turkeys and salmon till his dying day. For my part, I have a great mind to step across and wish him joy and demand a blessing."

"I always prophesied this marriage," said Caroline.

"And secretly wished it to come to pass," said George tartly, "to prove your superior sagacity."

"What an old fool!" said Mrs. Harford.

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"He is to be pitied," said Ellen.

"He deserves to be punished," said George.

"I hope he may," said Rose. "That horrible old woman; I will never call her aunt, nor him uncle, again."

"This is a serious misfortune to us all," continued George. "I had hoped that when my health was fully established for foreign service, my uncle, who I am sure was fond of me, would have assisted me in purchasing my promotion. Without money and influence, I may remain a poor lieutenant for years; and must give up all prospect of a speedy union with Ellen."

"Do not think of me, George; the consciousness of deserving your love is enough to render me happy."

"Poor comfort that, Nell. Caroline, you are a sensible girl,—what is to be done?"

"Much, brother, if you are willing to make the sacrifice."

"Let us hear what it is."

"To leave your native country and settle in the Canadas."

"Madness! What did my uncle William do with himself, when he settled in that quarrelsome, turbulent colony?"

"That was before my day," returned Caroline, laughing. "Uncle William was an old bachelor, much given to self-indulgence, and the pleasures of the table. He quarrelled with my father, and in a sulk took himself off to Canada. It is now more than thirty years ago; and Canada in 1812, and Canada in 1842, are very different places. What was then a wild, uncultivated waste, is now a great and rising country, daily increasing in wealth, population, and commercial advantages. It would be no great hard-

ship now, to a well-educated Englishman, to purchase a cleared farm in the neighbourhood of a flourishing town, where his own language is spoken, and he may live under the protection of the British government and British laws. Poor uncle took up a large grant of wild land, many miles from the nearest settlement, and commenced clearing it at a great expense, and with little profit to himself. Disappointment followed upon disappointment; his property soon melted like the winter snows; he took to drinking, and died of a broken heart.

"But why should this be your fate, my brother? You are young and strong, and have a loving partner to stimulate you to exert all your powers for your mutual benefit. You have two hundred pounds left to you by this very uncle; my little legacy left to me by my aunt I will throw into the common stock, nor shall you want for a warm and affectionate heart to assist you both, and lighten the first toils and hardships of your settlement. I will myself accompany you, and do all in my power to assist you."

"Dear, generous Caroline!" cried both, seizing a hand of the now animated Caroline, and pressing it to their lips. "We did not expect this from you."

"Your plan is worth consideration," said George. "I begin to feel pleased with it."

"And I," said Ellen, "we should carry the great essentials to happiness with us—those we love."

"And what would become of us?" asked Rose, pouting. "I would rather starve under the hedgerows of England, than be a queen in the Canadas."

"You shall remain behind, and take care of dear mamma," said George, "and we will write to you very often, and amuse you with our adventures."

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Caroline, I am quite in love with your scheme. Will your mother part with you, Ellen?"

"She has so many to provide for, George, she will scarcely miss me. If you should make up your mind to go, I shall throw no impediment in the way; I shall only be too happy to accompany you."

"Say no more upon this distressing subject to-night," said Mrs. Harford, rising. "It will be a hard thing for me to part with my dear children."

CHAPTER V.

HISTORIES AND CONFESSIONS.

THE news of the Doctor's marriage soon spread over the village. It was the general theme of conversation with all the gossips in the neighbourhood. Some blamed the Doctor, and pitied the *poor* Harfords, now doubly *poor* in their estimation; while many laughed at the whole affair, and secretly enjoyed the disappointment of a family, whom they hated for their superior education and personal advantages.

"Those girls need not hold up their heads so high," said one kind friend to another. "When the mother dies they will not have a farthing, after all the airs they give themselves. I wonder what will become of them. The old man was quite right to please himself. Of course, he will leave all his money to his wife. She will be a rich woman. I think I will call upon them to-morrow." This is but the common way of the world, but it is not the less bitter to those who are called upon to endure it because it is of every-day occurrence.

Poor Rose felt these slighting observations very keenly, for there were not wanting those who took a malicious pleasure in repeating to one party the ill-natured remarks of the other; and many of the tales thus told, and speeches thus made, were the outpourings of their own malevolent hearts, palmed upon their neighbours as, "I heard a person say the

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other day, Miss Rose—of course, no friend to your family—that your uncle had just treated you all as you deserved; that family sneaks are generally disappointed in their speculations; that your uncle well knew that you only courted him for his money.” Now this cruel speech had been made by the very person who retailed it to Rosamond Harford, to see what effect her ill-natured remarks would produce, and to repeat to her uncle any impatient reply that might be extorted from his angry niece.

One family, however, stood firm by the Harfords in this great crisis of their fortune. Mr. Burnham was a friend to both parties, and he hoped gradually to bring about a reconciliation.

A few days after the Doctor's marriage, the Misses Harford were invited to spend the day at the Burnhams. The lawyer had no family, and he felt a deep interest in the two beautiful girls and their soldier brother, and was particularly desirous of showing them attention at a time when all the families in the neighbourhood joined in slighting them. Rosamond had not seen Edward since her uncle's marriage, and she was certain that he would console her, for what, after all, might be considered by some as only an imaginary loss.

Caroline thought it more than probable that Rosamond would be disappointed; but this time she said nothing. Miss Talfourd was not acquainted with the Burnhams; and George preferred staying at home with his mother and her to joining his sisters in their visit.

Rosamond took unusual pains with her toilet that day, as if she thought that the loss of fortune would be more than compensated by her personal charms.

"Really, Rose, you look delightfully to-day," said Caroline, who, in spite of their petty difficulties, loved her tenderly, and was very proud of her beauty. "That simple muslin dress becomes you amazingly, and the sprig of jessamine in your hair is a proper emblem of youth and innocence. I wonder who we shall meet at Mrs. Burnham's. None of your *sympathising* friends, I hope, or they will mar all the pleasures of the visit."

"We shall only see those who really love us, and feel for our disappointment," said Rose. "Clement Cotterel told me that he wished much to introduce his sister to me. She is but a farmer's daughter, but I am told that she is a very superior girl. What a nice husband, Caroline, Clement Cotterel would make for you."

"And why for me, Rosamond?"

"Because he is so grave and prudent. You seem cut out for each other."

"He is a very good young man," said Caroline. "I should think myself fortunate in attracting his attention, but I know that he is attracted elsewhere; and as I feel deeply interested in his success, I sincerely wish that he may obtain the object of his affections."

"Who is she? Do tell me, Caroline."

"No, no, I shall not tell my secret to gratify your idle curiosity. She ought to be a good, sensible girl, for no other can be worthy of Clement Cotterel."

"Well, I like Clement *very well*, but he is not dashing enough to please me. Yet I should like to know what sort of a girl he is in love with."

"This much I will tell you, Rosamond, that she is well known to you, and the very reverse of himself. Come, are you ready? Are you not tired of

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looking in the glass? We shall be too late for dinner, and dear Mrs. Burnham is punctuality itself."

The two girls had to walk to the end of the village. It was a glorious midsummer day; the sea lay glittering in the distance; the gardens that skirted their path on either side of the road were rich with summer fruit and flowers, and the breezes that swept through them came back laden with delicious odours; the hedgerows were full of honeysuckle and wild roses, and Rosamond, as blythe as any bird, sang aloud in the very joy of her heart—

"O come to the meadows; I'll show you where

Primrose and violet blow;

And the hawthorn spreads her blossoms fair,

White as the driven snow.

I'll show you where the daisies dot

With silver stars the lea;

The orchis, and forget-me-not,

The flower of memory!

The gold cup and the meadow sweet,

That love the river side;

The reed that bows the wave to meet,

And sighs above the tide.

The stately flag, that proudly rears

Aloft its yellow crest;

The lily in whose cup the tears

Of morn delight to rest.

The first in Nature's dainty wreath,

We'll cull the briar rose;

The crow-foot and the purple heath,

And pink that sweetly blows.

The hare-bell, with its airy flowers,

Shall deck my true love's breast;

Of all that bud in woodland bowers,

I love the hare-bell best.

I'll pull the bonny golden broom,

To bind thy flowing hair;

For thee the eglantine shall bloom,

Whose fragrance fills the air;

We'll sit beside yon wooded knoll,

And hear the blackbird sing;

And fancy in his merry troll,

The joyous voice of spring."

"Well, 'tis a long ditty, Caroline, and I'll sing no more of it this day, for here we are opposite uncle's

gate, and the very sight of the dear old house and the pretty garden takes away all my voice. To think of that vulgar Mary Orams' driving us from such a paradise, is enough to damp the highest spirits. And there is the bride herself, sitting at the open window, with a fan in her hand, dressed in a crimson satin gown. Oh, ye poppies and sunflowers! hide your diminished heads! shrink—shrink into the shade, and, blushing yet deeper, acknowledge yourselves outdone."

"Shall we call?" said Caroline, with a mischievous smile, and laying her hand upon the garden-gate. "I am sure it is time that we both paid our respects to our new aunt."

"If you could demean yourself in such a manner, Caroline, I would never speak to you again."

"Nonsense! will you let Mary Orams have it all her own way? I have an object of my own to answer by this visit. So, good day, Rose; I shall join you in a few minutes at Mrs. Burnham's."

Rose was lost in rage and astonishment; but so greatly was her curiosity excited, that she could scarcely refrain from following her sister to the house. She peeped over the corner of the shrub-bound fence until she saw the servant admit Caroline, and then went on her way wondering.

Mrs. Burnham received her young guest with her usual kindness, and inquired for Caroline. Instead of sympathising in Rosamond's indignation, she expressed herself much pleased with her sister's conduct. While they were yet talking about it, the servant announced Miss Cotterel, and a very sensible but plain-looking girl, dressed with the utmost simplicity and scrupulous neatness, entered the room. After the introduction was over, and the two girls

found the room to be a companion's splendid prints.

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found themselves seated side by side at the drawing-room table, Rosamond tried to attract her companion's attention by turning over the pages of a splendid scrap-book, full of beautiful sketches and prints.

"These are pretty," said she. "I do not know who they are by, but I know the scenes they represent. Do you draw, Miss Cotterel?"

"A little," said Annie, blushing. "These sketches, that you are pleased to admire, were done by me three years ago. I can draw much better now. I am really ashamed of such rough things. Mrs. Burnham must restore them to me, and I will replace them with better."

Rose was surprised that a farmer's daughter, and one who seemed so diffident, should be able to draw so well. She had received what her neighbours termed a first-rate education, but her drawings, although she had a taste for the art, were inferior to these.

"By whom were you taught?" she asked; "have you been at a first-rate school?"

"I never was within the doors of a school in my life. My father has a great objection to boarding-school educations. I had an aunt, a dear, good aunt, whom I loved equally with my mother. She had been educated for a governess, and while her health lasted taught in several noble families. She returned to us with a broken constitution, and the last years of her valuable life were devoted to the education of Clement and me. It was from her that my brother gained his musical skill, and the taste for literature that has raised him above his humble station. If you knew, Miss Harford, how much we both owe to this dear, excellent woman, you would be able to appreciate the deep grief which we both feel, that she is lost to

us for ever. No, not for ever," she continued, correcting herself, "we shall, I hope, meet again; for she early led us to embrace the blessed faith that made her so happy and contented here, and rendered her death-bed a scene of patient resignation and holy trust. I have heard foolish girls despise old maids; but if all old maids were like Aunt Anne, I should profer being one, and consider the opprobrious epithet a title of honour."

"You and Caroline must be friends, great friends," said Rose, "for she does not care for admirers, and talks in raptures of a state of single blessedness. For my part, I am willing to relinquish to you both all the advantages of such a cheerless state. You may enjoy your solitary firesides, your cats and monkeys, and Sunday-schools, and prayer-meetings; I would rather preside over a crowded table, and be saluted by the squalling of a dozen children, than dream away my time and rest, in such dull, cold, decencies for ever."

Annie Cotterel laughed heartily at Rosamond's vehemence, and told her that she had no doubt of her sincerity; and wished that she might be the mistress of a plentiful house, and possess the luxury of a large family of children.

"All in good time," said Mrs. Burnham; "but I would rather see dear Rosa the wife of a good man than a rich one; as her cheerful temper and industrious habits are more suited to a quiet country home, than to the great world. Its heartless show and hollow friendships would break a warm, generous heart like hers."

"Oh! I should like to visit London so much," said Rose.

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double zest the more innocent and rational amusements of the country," returned the matron. "It is, however, a natural wish that all young people entertain. They long to go to London, to see a little of the great world, which they picture to themselves as a perfect paradise; and their admiring friends as little less than ministering angels. I could make you laugh, Rose Harford, and heartily too, if I were to give you a slight sketch of my first visit to London."

"Oh! do, dear Mrs. Burnham, pray do!" exclaimed both girls in a breath.

"By the way of a moral lecture I will grant your request," said she, laughing to herself, as the far off past came floating up the broad stream of memory, bringing along with it all the airy fancies and distorted dreams, framed by those twin handmaids of Youth, Hope and Vanity.

"My father was the poor, proud representative of a noble, but ruined family. All that remained to him of the ancient power and splendour of his ancestors, was one small estate; the very least of all their former vast possessions. But my good father was as vain of his peerless hall and his old name, as other men are of their wealth and political importance, and he brought up me and my six brothers and sisters with the most exaggerated ideas of our consequence. My mother was his second wife, for he had been the husband of two. She married him when he was advanced in life, and brought some money into the family, which his reckless generosity and extravagance soon dissipated, and left him as poor as ever.

"My dear mother's family connexions were the very reverse of her husband's. They were a vulgar, avaricious, money-getting set; who laughed at their

sister for uniting her destiny with a poor gentleman. My father's hatred to those people was intense; and after a few years, he dropped all intercourse with them, even by letter, so that although we had numerous uncles and aunts on this side of the house, we, the younger branches of the family, were unknown to them all. Things continued in this state until my father died, and my mother was left to struggle on with a large family, and very limited means.

"My eldest sister, who was a clever, sensible woman, proposed keeping a boarding school, but the foolish pride of the rest rejected this rational proposal with contempt. Hoping to obtain some assistance in her trying circumstances, my mother, for the first time in twenty years, wrote to her father, imploring his advice and assistance. But time, and her long silence had so estranged the heart of the old man from his child, that he replied to her application with a cold and contemptuous refusal. Some months elapsed, when the post one day brought my mother a letter from her married sister (the two others were old maids), who was the wife of a rich merchant, inviting me to spend the winter with her in London. She spoke at length of the unnatural estrangement which had for so many years separated the families, and said, that she was ready to forget and forgive the past, if my mother would send up Rachel (for so she heard I was called), as a peace-offering, and if she liked me, in all probability, she would adopt me into the family, and provide for me for the future. This offer, in our circumstances, was too good to be slighted; I, in particular, was all joy and anticipation. In vain my mother prepared me for disappointment, by telling me that her sister

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Mary was, from all she could recollect of her, a disagreeable, unamiable girl, and though she hoped that time had made many favourable changes in her character and disposition, she warned me not to expect too much from her. Nay, she went so far as to say, that if it were not for her present difficulties, she would by no means consent to part with me; but she hoped that my presence might make an impression upon my grandfather in her behalf—she was anxious that I should try my fortune.

“I was a romantic girl, brought up in the deepest seclusion, and having free access to my father’s library, had read all the novels and romances of the last century. I was a second female Quixote, and I fancied that I was a perfect beauty, who had only to be seen to be admired—that my wit was irresistible, that, in short, I was as clever as I was good and fair. You smile, girls, and well you may; I can laugh at such follies myself, now; but if you examine closely your own hearts, you will find them possessed by much the same spirit.”

“I will plead guilty to the charge,” said Rosamond, “for I fancied just now, that I had only to go to London, to be followed and admired.”

“Such might be the case,” returned the matron, glancing kindly at the lovely girl, “but beauty and talent are so common in that vast emporium, in whose crowded circles are to be found all that adorns and dignifies the human species, that a person must be eminently talented and beautiful to attract public attention. Girls brought up in towns and cities are perfectly aware of this. The experience of every day forces it upon the mind; but the country girl, who has scarcely seen a female out of her own family, superior to herself, imagines that all perfections

dwelt in herself, and cannot be convinced of her error until she is taught it through a thousand humiliating lessons.

"It took my elder sisters a week to prepare my scanty, unfashionable wardrobe. As to me, I was too much in the clouds to work. I wandered about the groves and gardens which surrounded the house, in a dream of anticipated delight—holding long conversations with imaginary lovers, whom I accepted and rejected at my will.

"At length the day came which was fixed upon for my departure. It was the 1st of November, a day never to be forgotten by me. A dull, heavy, dark, misty day, gloom within, and blinding sea mist without. I rose as soon as I could distinguish the first dull streaks of returning day; and although the mail did not pass through the village before seven in the evening, I commenced packing my trunk. My mother and sisters joked me about all this, but it was a matter of serious importance to me, and I gave myself, heart and soul, to the work.

"Breakfast came, but I was too much excited to eat. After packing I had nothing else to do, and I thought that the long weary hours would never move onward. Yet in spite of all this hurry and anxiety to be off, when the hour of separation *really* came, my heart quite failed me, and I clung around my mother's neck as if I should never see her again, and wept as if my heart would break. My sister saw me down to the coach. It poured with rain, and our dresses and umbrellas were nearly wet through before we reached the inn. We were at least an hour too soon, and were shown into the neat sanded parlour of the Angel Inn, to dry our garments and wait for the coach.

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"A traveller was seated before the fire, with his feet upon the fender, and the poker in his hand, with which he occasionally gave a vigorous stir to the already blazing coals, until every object in the room was distinctly revealed in the ruddy light. Sometimes he whistled and hummed a tune, or suspended these operations to stare at us. His presence was everything but agreeable. He broke into a thousand bright reveries, and knocked several air-built castles to the ground. I wished him and his bottle-green coat, and large gilt buttons and poker, in the mines of Cornwall. He was the most unsentimental person I ever beheld.

"There were a variety of pictures suspended round the walls of the white-washed room. The history of the prodigal son, and the four quarters of the globe, represented by four very questionable-looking women, who served in a double capacity as emblems of the seasons of the year. My sister and I tried to pass away the time by examining the countenances of these full-blown worthies, upon which our bottle-green companion started from his seat, following us from picture to picture, exclaiming in genuine cockney—

"*Beautiful that, I vow.* A queer spoony that are prodigal son. I never knew that the chaps in them days wore buckskin breeches. Lor, vot a hugly vitch that Mistress Hafrica is; her lion yawning as if he would break his jaws.'

"My sister, who was a very pretty girl, turned to the fire to conceal the smile, which, in spite of all her aristocratic pride, curved her dimpled mouth; while our tormentor having broken the ice, as he conceived, of our frigid silence by the sound of his own harmonious voice, thus addressed her:—

“ ‘ A vet hevening this; hare you for London, Miss?’ ”

“ My sister coldly bowed in assent.

“ ‘ Sorry for that, Miss; hi’m for Yarmouth—should wastly have henjayed your company on the road. Hi’m halways hin my proper heliment ven taking care of the females.’ ”

“ The sound of the coachman’s horn broke off his conversation, and he rushed to the door to welcome its arrival, and relieved us for ever from the impertinence of his presence.

“ My heart beat audibly, and the tears were flowing fast down my cheeks, as the coachman’s round burly head was thrust into the room, and the abrupt announcement of—‘ The coach is ready,’ told us that we must part. It was the first time in my life that I had ever left home, and the pang of separation came upon me with an intensity that I had not expected, whilst indulging in my romantic speculations—they were imaginary,—this was real.

“ My sister busied herself in wrapping my cloak around me, to hide her own emotion. The cold raw air rushed through the open door and chilled me to the heart. The rattling of the harness, the tramping of the horses, the hasty tread of busy feet, the splashing of the heavy rain upon the pavement, and above all, the black darkness of the night, all combined to upset me; at last I tore myself away and suffered the guard to place me in the coach.

“ The lights in the doorway still showed me the fine countenance of my sister, bathed in tears, and I gazed upon no other object, till the cry of ‘ All right!’ sounded in my ears, and the coach dashed into the thick darkness, and I threw myself into a corner to dream of home, and weep for the next ten miles.

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CHAPTER VI.

FRESH DISAPPOINTMENTS.

"It was a long time," continued Mrs. Burnham, "before I could discover who were my fellow-travellers in the coach; the night being too dark, and the lamps placed too far forward, for me to discern their faces and costumes. I soon perceived by their conversation that there were only two persons, besides myself, in the gloomy cavern into which we were stowed, who afterwards proved to be a lady from London, returning thither from a visit to a sick mother, and a major in the army, whose regiment had just landed at Yarmouth, from the Continent, and who was on his way to the metropolis with despatches. They were talking of the Duke of Kent's sudden death, which had happened a few days before; and the officer spoke of him in very high terms. After some time, the lady asked me, in a very sweet voice, where I was from—and if I was going the whole journey? I soon told her not only my name and place of abode, but before the night was half over, my whole history; boasting of the antiquity of my father's family, and naming all the great families to whom he was remotely allied.

"The officer seemed highly amused by my imprudent disclosures, and soon drew from me the reason of my present journey, the sanguine notions

I had formed of London, and the certainty with which I expected to make my fortune there. Never did youth and inexperience play the fool in a more preposterous manner. I hate to recal, even at this hour, the absurd manner in which I exposed my vanity and ignorance to the world.

"Fortunately for me, I had fallen into the hands of good Samaritans. The kind lady was a mother, and only smiled at my foolish sallies, and the gallant officer seemed to think not the worse of me, for wearing my heart upon my sleeve. They not only took me under their especial protection, but insisted upon paying all my expenses upon the road.

"At Ipswich the officer took his leave, his servant having arrived with horses, in order that he might prosecute his journey with greater speed. The good-natured lady dozed the rest of the sixty miles; as for me, I could not sleep—London was ever present to my eyes. I pictured to myself, a second Athens or Rome. And when the dull morning at length dawned upon dull, narrow, filthy streets, and interminable rows of dingy, forbidding-looking houses, looming like black giants through the fog, I wondered what town we were entering. My companion soon relieved me from all my doubts, for awakening with a gentle yawn, and rubbing her eyes, she said,—

" 'I thought we were upon the stones—thank God! we are in London at last. My dear husband—my dear little ones—I have not seen you for six long, long weeks; oh, how I long to see you all again!'

" 'And is *this* London?' I exclaimed, turning my back upon Limehouse, Stepney, and Whitechapel, in despair. 'What a place! I wish I was back again in the country.'

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" 'What part of London are you going to?' said the lady.

" 'The Tower.'

" 'Worse and worse,' said she, laughing: 'but this is not a day when the city would appear to any advantage. It is just such a one as the cockneys are said to choose when they wish to hang or drown themselves. But here we are at the Saracen's Head; and here is the carriage and dear William himself, and two of the boys come for me.'

"I envied the kind woman the happy meeting between her and her family. The husband was a handsome merchant—the sons, two sweet boys of eight and ten, and their faces were all smiles, and there was such kissing and shaking hands between them all, that my own eyes were full of tears.

"And there I sat, a stranger in that vast, comfortless-looking city, without one friendly voice to greet me. I was cold, and disappointed, and miserable, and knew not what to do in this emergency. The guard came to the door and demanded the fare for me and my luggage; this I paid him. He told me, 'I must alight, as the coach put up at this place.' I said, 'I knew not where to go, my friends having promised to meet me.'

" 'I will call a coach for you, ma'am. The direction upon your trunk is Tower-street. You will find no difficulty in getting to it.'

"Just at this critical moment, a tall youth of eighteen, who looked like a mechanic, popped his head into the coach, and demanded my name. I drew back, with offended dignity, into the corner of the coach, and made no reply.

" 'Pray, miss, don't be offended: I meant no harm; I only want to know your name.'

" 'We are strangers, sir!' said I, very haughtily.

" 'At present, but I hope not always to remain so. Is your name Rachel Beauchamp?'

" 'It is,' said I, greatly surprised at its being familiar to a vulgar youth, shabbily dressed, and not over clean, in the streets of London.

" 'All right,' said he, cutting a caper, and rubbing his hands in a sort of ecstasy together. 'I have found you at last. I am your cousin, Sam Cornish, and there is sister Amy, and the baby, who are waiting for you on the pavement.'

" I felt sick with disgust, and my heart died within me, as, without uttering a word, I suffered Master Samuel to help me out of the coach. The moment my foot was upon the pavement, and before I could speak to the female of this extraordinary male, he flung his arms about my neck, and gave me a kiss that might have been heard across the street. Burning with shame, I burst from his rude grasp, and ran across the pavement to his sister, followed by the rude laugh of the coachman and my odious relative.

" The young lady, who smiled at what she considered my *airs*, was about four feet eight or nine inches in height, of a pale, cadaverous complexion, with melancholy, dull-looking dark eyes, a turned-up nose, a falling in mouth, and peaked chin. She was dressed in a dirty dark print gown, an old red shawl about her shoulders, and a black chip hat upon her head, ornamented by a dingy red flower, and her hair in curl-papers. The child she held in her arms, a boy of eighteen months, was as homely a specimen of the juvenile portion of the species as I had ever looked upon; and his face was so begrimed with dirt, that he looked almost like an infant chimney-sweep. I had taken this deplorable-looking person

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for a nurse-girl of the lowest class; and you may imagine my feelings upon being introduced to her as a near relative.

" 'I 'ope, cousin,' she lisped out, 'that you hare not ashamed of us.'

" We were now joined by Master Samuel, who, to my increasing distress, was staggering under the weight of my trunk.

" 'Mr. Cornish,' I cried, for I could not as yet form my mouth to call him cousin, 'pray call a porter.'

" 'Nonsense,' said he, 'that's the way you country Johnnies throw away your money. Father told me to save you the expense of portorage, and carry your trunk myself, and I dare not disobey the governor, or I should catch it. But I can tell you 'tis deucedly heavy.'

" 'I am sorry to give you so much trouble,' I replied; but I was severely mortified, and wondered what sort of people the father and mother of these young persons could be, when, rich as I knew they were, they could suffer their children to perform such menial offices in public. My reverie was again interrupted by cousin Sam.

" 'You don't seem very glad to see us, Cousin Rachel,'—how I hated his familiarity,—'and it is really too bad, after the dance I had for you this morning. I went to the coach-stand in Leadenhall-street, and asked all the ladies their names in the different mail-coaches; some laughed and others were angry, and called me an impertinent puppy; but not one among them all was so stiff as you were.'

" I did not answer him; I felt too depressed, and I held down my head in order to escape observation. At length we entered Tower-street,

which, narrow and dirty as it always appears, is nevertheless one of the great arteries of London. The centre of the street was crowded with huge dray-carts, and the width between them and the wall so small, and the pavement so greasy and slippery from the rain, that I clung to the arm of my rude companion for fear of being entangled in the crowd. Just at the junction of the street with Tower-hill, we stopped at the front of a large house. Amy rang a loud peal at the door bell, which was answered by another female, yet more dirty and deplorable than Miss Amy. That young lady gave a knowing wink to the domestic slave, as she tossed the baby into her arms.

“ ‘Here, Betty, take Owen; I can tell you that my harm is tired of him. Is breakfast over?’ ”

“ ‘Not quite; there’s still a bite left for you,’ said the impudent wench, staring full into my face. ‘Missus was tired of waiting for you, and got cruel cross. Is this here tall gall your country cousen?’ ”

“ ‘Ay, she’s twice as tall as *me*, Betty, isn’t she? Vell, I halvays did ’ate tall vimmen. They look so hawkward, don’t they?’ ”

“And with this polite speech I was ushered, not up-stairs into the parlour, but down-stairs into a dark, miserable under-ground kitchen, where a lamp and one greasy tallow-candle were contending with the grey, foggy, unwholesome light, which was scantily admitted through a long, low, iron-barred window.

“At a table covered with a coarse cloth sat a thin, spare, hatchet-faced woman, pouring out tea. She was dressed in a blue, spotted calico gown; an apron, which, like the cap upon her head, had once been white and clean, but long, long ago, and tied with

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strings of different colours. Her shoes were down at heel, and a more decided slattern could hardly have presented herself to the eyes of a stranger. Directly opposite to her sat, in wicker-work chairs, two boys, from three to four years old, in their night gowns. One, who was deeply marked with the small-pox, held up round its middle a meagre cat, a helpless victim of infant tyranny, which was uttering useless cries in the vain hope of being released from its juvenile tormentor. The other little fellow was kicking the fender, and munching a piece of bread and butter.

"I still stood in the door-way, reluctant to advance, not knowing how to address the matron, for I could not believe that *this* was my aunt, the once handsome sister of my dear, neat, ladylike mother; but she soon dismissed my doubts, by calling to me in a shrill, vulgar-toned voice,—

" 'Yes, I'm your aunt! I'm not a fine lady, like your mother; and my husband is not a poor, proud gentleman, like your father. But we have plenty, without having to ask charity of friend or foe. Sit down, child; I dare say you are tired, and the coach-wheels must be lumbering in your head. If you had come a little sooner, I could have given you a good cup of tea; but now it is little better than slop.'

" 'Can't you make the gall a fresh cup of tea, Mary? it won't cost so much,' said a hoarse voice from a corner of the room; and I now discovered through the gloom the figure of a man in his trousers and shirt sleeves, shaving at a glass fastened against the wall. As he turned to survey me, with his broad dark face half covered with lather, and his wiry black hair standing straight up from his wrin-

kled forehead, which was cut into all sorts of hieroglyphics by the small-pox, I thought I had never seen a face so coarse and ugly.

“ ‘ Lord, William ! hold your tongue. It’s quite good enough ; you would not have me make the gall nervous, would you ? ’

“ ‘ She seems that already,’ said the old sailor, for he had just made his fortune as captain of a West Indian trader. ‘ If she’s not piping her eye ! Well, ’tis natural. She is just from home, and that for the first time. Dry your eyes, child ; you are among relations and friends.’

“ ‘ Thank you, uncle,’ I said, sinking down upon the chair he offered me ; ‘ I shall feel more at home to-morrow, I hope ; but my heart is full ; indeed, I can’t help it.’ And having made this confession, I wept in good earnest, greatly to the annoyance of my aunt. Cousin Sam handed me the cup of smoky hot water, which she called tea. Had it been the most delicious bowl of fragrant gunpowder or imperial, I could not have tasted it : there was such a choking, stifling feeling in my throat, that all attempts to swallow proved ineffectual. A strange cold, shuddering sensation stole over me ; my hair seemed to rise on my head ; my teeth chattered ; and finally, these preliminary symptoms ended in a violent fit of hysterics.

“ When I recovered, I was lying upon a mattress in a two-bedded room up-stairs. My cousin Amy, and her attendant, Betty, were making the other bed. When I rose into a sitting posture, both the girls burst into a giggling laugh.

“ ‘ So Miss has got over her meagrimms at last,’ said Betty, with a grin ; ‘ I think that Missus will be a fine one to cure her of those fine lady pranks. What

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" 'Ush!' said her amiable companion; 'she may 'ear what you say.'

" 'I don't care if she do,' responded the other; 'I s'pose that 'ere gown vas vite, vich she 'as on, ven she left 'ome. It's a pretty colour now, isn't it?'

" This speech made me direct my eyes to my own person, and truly I cut a deplorable figure. My hair was out of curl, and hung in long locks about my pale, woe-begone face; my dress was all rumped with my journey, and covered with London blacks; and my hands looked as much soiled as my dress. I saw the propriety of immediately remedying these evils, and politely asked Betty to bring up a little water to wash with, as there was none in the ewer.

" 'We never vash in the chambers,' said my obliging cousin; 'and in this 'ouse, people vait upon themselves. You vill find a 'and-basin on the kitchen sink, and a round towel on the nail.'

" To the kitchen I went; as I found that there was no alternative, and as my aunt was there alone, I began my ablutions in good earnest, she watching askance from the stocking she was mending the whole operation. I then proceeded to unlock my trunk, and took from thence my comb-bag, and going to my uncle's glass, endeavoured to restore my brown curls to their usual gloss.

" 'Well,' said my aunt, 'the less time you bestow upon the glass, the better, Rachel. It will never alter your face, and that is plain enough. I heard my brother say that you were a pretty baby; and they always grow up the worst looking, and you were a pretty baby.'

" Plain as she considered me, I certainly was, with-

out any self-delusion, the most respectable-looking female in the house; and I went on brushing my hair, without noticing her ill-natured remarks.

“‘What clothes have you brought with you?’ said she, starting from her chair, and going to my open trunk. ‘I don’t mean to be at the trouble of washing white gowns for you, I can tell you. I will just look over your things, if you please, and tell you what to wear;’ and before I could hinder her, she tossed all my neatly-folded clothes upon the kitchen floor, opening and examining even my under garments. I felt my blood boil within me, at what I considered a perfect outrage. She saw me change colour, and told me ‘that I need not feel *miffed*, for she always did as she pleased in her own house; and that if I did not like it, I might leave it; that I was just like my mother, and she saw that I could never be a favourite with her.’

“‘Then do let me go home,’ I cried, again bursting into tears; ‘I cannot stay here; it will break my heart. I must return this very night.’

“‘You will think better of it after dinner,’ said my aunt, who perhaps was ashamed of telling me to go home a few hours after my arrival; ‘you have seen none of the sights of London yet.’

“‘I have seen enough of them,’ I cried, sobbing as if my heart would break. ‘Why did I leave my dear kind mother and sisters, to come to a place like this?’

“‘Ah, ha!’ said my aunt, ‘but you have not seen the house yet. Put up your duds,’ continued she, kicking my clothes contemptuously with her foot, ‘and I will show you the parlours and drawing-room.’

“I was so disgusted with herself, her daughter, and

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her kitchen, that I followed her very sulkily upstairs. Great was my astonishment, however, on being shown into a splendidly furnished room, the walls of which were covered with fine paintings, some from the old masters, which were worth many hundred pounds. I looked from the gay walls to the plain, common-looking mistress of the house. They certainly were not in unison. She guessed my thoughts, and said, with some bitterness—

“‘Fools always judge by the outside of the purse. The brown leather bag generally holds the most gold. When I wish to wear a fine gown, and sit in a fine room, I can do it, and that is more than my lady sister is able to do. Come this way.’

“She then opened the door of the drawing-room, which was a noble apartment, and furnished very expensively. I remarked a handsome grand piano-forte.

“‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I play and sing well—Amy, still better, she has won the gold medal from Mr. Rolph’s academy several times.’

“I wondered that with such rooms—with sideboards with a good deal of plate, and wardrobes full of rich clothes—how my aunt and cousin could spend more than half their lives in a dirty kitchen, and in such mean attire. One word might have answered all my doubts—‘*Avarice!*’ They wanted the heart and ability to enjoy all the good they possessed. Their wealth was of a soul-debasing and sordid kind. They only prized their luxuries for what they cost, and for fear of injuring their value, they never made any use of them. Occasionally they were displayed to gratify their self-love. Once every year, they gave a great party, when all this grandeur was displayed to their envying guests. The other three

hundred and sixty-three days they were contented to grope through life like moles, in the dark. How I pitied and despised them !

" But to cut this long story short, my dear girls ; that night saw me again an inside traveller in the mail coach ; but this time it was not to London. Never did the reprieved criminal feel greater transport in quitting his gloomy cell, than did I, when I turned my back upon that wonderful, and to me, unexplored city. In after years, when I became familiar with its magnificent buildings, and the warm, kind hearts which are to be found within its walls, I have laughed, when I recalled the breathless haste and the deep disappointment with which I fled from it, after a few hours' sojourn, and hoped that it was for ever."

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CHAPTER VII.

WHICH ENDS IN A WEDDING.

Mrs. BURNHAM had scarcely finished speaking, when Caroline came in.

"How did Mrs. Beaumont behave to you?" cried Rosamond, running to meet her.

"Oh! better than might have been expected. She shook hands with me, cordially, for her, and hoped that I would soon call again."

"Vastly condescending—and poor uncle?"

"Looks dismally crest-fallen. I am sure he repents his marriage already; I told him that he looked thin."

"'No wonder,' quoth he; 'I have not had a dinner cooked fit for a Christian to eat since I married; Mrs. Beaumont does not cook for me *now*—and we have found no one with sufficient ability to fill her place.'

"Mrs. Beaumont laughed to herself, and said, 'That she was glad to escape from the fatigue of cooking. That for the last ten years she had been broiled to death over great fires; she thought it was high time to rest and cool herself.'

"Uncle sighed deeply, and remarked—'That the fine salmon George had sent him had been spoilt by Sally in the cooking; that he was so vexed about it, that he did not feel so grateful for the present as he ought.' He then asked after George, and what

he was going to do for himself. This was just what I wanted.

"'He can do nothing at home,' I said; 'his promotion is stopped for want of means; and he is determined to marry Miss Talfourd, and emigrate to Canada; and he did not like to take such an important step without consulting you.'

"'It is the very best thing he could do,' said Mrs. Beaumont.

"My uncle shook his head; I saw the tear gathering in his eye.

"'Cannot he wait patiently for a few years?'

"'What good would that do him?' returned the bride, with an awful frown.

"The old man fidgeted upon his chair; he glanced timidly at his new mistress, but I saw no hope in that quarter.

"'Perhaps,' he continued, 'it is his wisest course. I am sorry that I cannot help him, but I may have a family of my own.'

"I dared not look at the doting old man for fear of laughing outright.

"'It is possible,' I replied; 'Sarah was ninety years old when Isaac was born.'

"'I don't expect miracles, child,' said he, very gravely. 'Mrs. Orams—Beaumont I mean—is not fifty yet.'

"'Fifty!' screamed the enraged bride. 'I am not forty until next birthday.'

"'I beg pardon, my dear!' returned the youthful bridegroom. 'I knew that you were a young woman just in your prime.'

"'You ought to know it, and be proud of it too,' said the offended lady, smoothing down the folds of her rich silk gown. 'But, Miss Harford,' she cried,

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turning to me; 'is not your brother very imprudent to marry a girl without any money, in his circumstances?'

" 'He would not marry were he going to remain in England,' I replied. 'But what could he do without a wife in the backwoods of Canada?'

" 'True, child,' said the Doctor; 'I am no great advocate for matrimony;' here he caught another frown from his wife. 'But I think George is right.' Then leaning forward upon the elbow of his chair, he whispered in my ear—'Tell him he shall get a hundred pounds from me to help him out—but don't say a word to the wife.'

"I felt the colour rise into my face, but seeing that nothing further could be done, I rose and made my adieus. Mrs. Beaumont followed me to the door.

" 'What was that your uncle said to you, Miss Caroline?' she asked, in no very gentle voice. 'I hate whispering incompany.'

" 'It was something which concerned myself, Mrs. Beaumont,' I said, firmly, but politely. 'If it had been of any consequence the Doctor would have spoken aloud. Good morning!' and off I ran, upon the whole not displeased with my visit; and glad to perceive that our cause was not so hopeless as I at first imagined."

"You think that there is little harmony between the newly-married couple?" said Mrs. Burnham.

"None," returned Caroline. "If she ceases to pamper his appetite, her sway will be limited. But this is all mere speculation. It is better for us to act, and leave the rest in the hands of Providence."

The ladies were joined by Mr. Burnham and the two young gentlemen; and the footman, at the same time, announced that dinner was on table.

Rosamond naturally expected that Edward Freeburn would lead her down stairs. She was surprised and disappointed, when, passing her with a slight bow, he gave his arm to Miss Cotterel, and led her from the room. Clement instantly sprang forward to supply his place, and drawing Rosamond's arm through his own, said, gaily—

"We are the last, Miss Rose; the youngest, and, I hope, the happiest pair in the room."

Rose tried to smile, but there was a moisture on the lids of her beautiful eyes, which looked rather like tears. She dashed it away, and descended in silence to the dining-room. At dinner, Edward had always contrived to get a seat next her. To-day there was no anxiety displayed to effect this. Entirely engrossed with Miss Cotterel, he did not even ask our fair Rosamond to take wine with him.

The dinner was excellent; the conversation general and lively; Rose alone was silent and miserable. Mr. Burnham remarked his favourite's abstraction, and began joking her about her uncle's marriage, which he declared an atrocious act, for robbing his dear young friend of her gay spirits. Rose coloured slightly, and rousing herself from her reverie, she saw at once that she was acting foolishly and drawing the attention of the party to herself. Pride came to her assistance (and she possessed no small share of it), and she answered carelessly.

"You are mistaken; I was sorry for that ridiculous marriage, for I could not endure the idea of calling that vulgar cook-maid aunt; but I am glad of it now."

"How! my pretty Rosamond? What can have made you alter your opinion?"

"It has given me a clearer insight into the world and its ways," returned Rosamond, glancing con-

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temptuously towards her lover. "It has taught me how to discern between real friends and pretended ones."

"But, my dear girl, such knowledge, although it may be useful, is far from agreeable. If you can philosophise upon it, and turn it to good account, happy are you."

"I will try," said Rosamond, and the conversation ended.

Edward Freeburn stole a glance at the offended girl. The warmth with which she had spoken had left a bright glow upon her cheeks, and given a clearer sparkle to her eyes. She looked beautiful, and in spite of the sordid selfishness of his character, he felt ashamed of himself.

After dinner the young people adjourned to the garden in search of amusement. Miss Cotterel and Caroline had grown into great friends, and they ran off into the grove to improve their acquaintance by a sentimental ramble. Rosamond and the two young gentlemen were left alone. Rose heartily wished herself at home, for she found it no easy task to conceal her tears, and affect an indifference, which it was foreign for one of her ardent temperament to feel. Clement proposed a walk to the sea-shore, to which Rosamond reluctantly consented.

"Freeburn," cried he, "will you not accompany us?"

"Oh no! a third person would be sadly in the way. The afternoon is too warm, and I am too lazy; besides, I want to finish the last volume of Bulwer's 'Night and Morning.' Good-bye, Clem—I wish you a pleasant stroll."

What passed during this walk, between Rosamond

and her companion, never transpired ; but certain it is, that the young lady returned in better spirits, Clement looked proud and happy, and a great intimacy grew up between the families, while Edward Freeburn's name was never mentioned by Rosamond or her sister.

In the meanwhile George Harford lost no time in making the necessary arrangements for his intended emigration. He obtained permission to retire upon half-pay, and settle in the Canadas ; and expended a part of their small means in fitting out himself and his young bride for their voyage ; Caroline was able to bear her own expenses.

In a few days Mrs. Harford's cottage presented a scene of bustle and confusion. The carpet and table were strewn with goods ; sheets and blankets occupied one sofa ; books and articles for the toilet, another ; coats and waistcoats were suspended upon the backs of chairs. No one could move about without stumbling over some article of use or uselessness, and wishing trunks and portmanteaus everywhere but in the place they occupied. And to add to this universal litter, sempstresses were at work in every chamber, and a restless and uncomfortable spirit pervaded the house.

"I wish all this fuss and confusion was over," sighed Rose ; who, too much excited to continue steadily at her needle, was wandering from room to room, like the evil genius of emigration, standing in her own and everybody's way ; while Caroline, ever active, was superintending the packing of trunks, attending to the fitting of dresses, regulating the confused assistance of servants, and answering letters of business, with as much calmness and promptitude,

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as if she were only a looker-on, and not one of the parties most deeply concerned in these important arrangements.

"If you cannot make yourself useful at home, Rose, could you not step over to the Talfourds and help Ellen; you really are dreadfully in our way," said Caroline. "I wish that you were going with us, and then you could not be so idle."

"Indeed, Caroline, you must forgive me," said poor Rose, bursting into tears. "When I think of you all going away to that far country, it makes me so miserable that I cannot settle to anything; I would gladly work, but my hand trembles so, and my eyes are so dim, that I cannot set a stitch."

"Well then, sit down and read," said Caroline, fondly kissing her pale cheek; "for I cannot work if you will keep misplacing everything and running in our way. To-morrow, and to-morrow, and the day after to-morrow, as the children said to Werter, and this scene of confusion will subside into its usual calm."

"Alas!" said Rosamond, putting on her bonnet to walk over to Ellen Talfourd's; "it will be the calm of death."

It had been arranged by George and his mother, that his wedding was to take place on the morning of their departure, Caroline and Rosamond acting as bridesmaids upon the occasion. They were to breakfast at Mr. Burnham's, and from thence proceed on board the steam-packet, which was to convey them to London, on their way to the far West.

The sudden marriage of Lieutenant Harford, and his departure for Canada, was the universal theme of conversation in the village. Some blamed his precipitancy, others laughed at his folly; few, but his

own immediate friends, praised him for his manly and independent conduct.

The day, so long dreaded by Mrs. Harford and Rose, at length dawned upon the world; and a beautiful and cloudless day it was; and seemed to smile propitiously upon the poor emigrants.

Caroline was up with the sun, and had seen every trunk and chest safely deposited in the boat which was to convey them on board, before she thought of the duties of the toilet—she found Rosamond still before the glass, but she looked pale and sad, and declared she would put on a mourning dress, instead of the rich white satin that George had provided for her.

"Nonsense!" said Caroline; "this day should be regarded by our family as a declaration of independence. White, and nothing but white, will suit it. But quick, dear Rose, I hear voices in the parlour; we shall be late."

A very few minutes served to arrange Caroline's dress; but she did not leave the chamber before she had laid her travelling dress ready for an exchange with her bridal finery, the moment the party returned from church. They found Ellen and her mother and sisters in the parlour; the poor young bride, struggling to hide the grief of an eternal separation from her family, in forced smiles. But it would not do, she flung herself into Caroline's arms, and wept.

"Courage, dear sister," said the strong-hearted girl; "reserve these tears for the parting hour. This belongs to joy, and joyful I hope it will prove to all."

The party proceeded on foot to the village church, which was but a few paces distant; and the glancing of their white dresses in the morning sun, made a

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gallant show. All the poor people in the village were assembled at the church gate, to see them pass; while more aristocratic heads were peeping from behind green blinds and curtains, to satisfy their curiosity, and see what the bride was dressed in.

At the altar they were met by old Mr. Beaumont himself, who had volunteered to fill Mr. Rolland's place, and perform the marriage ceremony. The old man sighed audibly, as his eye ran over the wedding party, and rested with a sad and regretful expression on the manly handsome face of his nephew, and his lovely bride. His voice sank almost to a whisper several times during the service. At length the knot was tied, and Ellen Harford received the congratulations of her friends.

"Will you accept mine, young lady?" said the old man, kissing her blushing cheek. "I am sorry that I cannot give my blessings in a more substantial form," he continued, thrusting a paper into her hand. "But, by-and-by I will not forget you, rest assured of that; God bless you! my dear children, I hope you may be prosperous and happy. As to your poor old uncle, he is of all men the most miserable;" so saying, the Doctor hobbled off, leaving the party not a little pleased at his kind reception and frank confession.

On returning to Mrs. Harford's, to change their dresses, Ellen found that the paper she had received from Dr. Beaumont, contained a cheque upon his banker for 500*l.*; which had the effect of raising her husband's spirits to an extravagant pitch of joy, and they all proceeded to Mrs. Burnham's, with smiling faces, looking upon this circumstance as a harbinger of future fortune.

I will pass over the sighs and tears, the bitter

sorrows of parting.—I have experienced them myself. You, my kind readers, have, many of you, felt the heart ache of that worst agony, leaving your dear native land, the friends of your youth, the home of your childhood. I need not repeat in words the feelings which no language can faithfully depict; you can all better determine from your own experience, the anguish which that hour brought forth, nor do I mean to follow our emigrants in their voyage across the great waters, or describe their first settlement in the backwoods of Canada, I reserve all these for another story, and another place. My present humour is to stay at home, and see what befel Rosamond, and how her old uncle left his property.

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CHAPTER VIII.

WHICH SUMS UP THE WHOLE MATTER.

It may well be imagined how solitary and sad Mrs. Harford and her daughter felt themselves after the departure of the bridal party; nor can it be wondered, that Annie Cotterel kindly invited herself to spend a few weeks at the cottage, in order to help dissipate the dulness; or that she and Rosamond, in the absence of Caroline, formed a very tender friendship for each other, or that Clement, who was a very affectionate brother, should often step over of an evening, to see his dear sister. I cannot tell how it happened, (but such things constantly do happen,) that in their evening rambles, Annie was always found loitering far behind, collecting from some convenient hedgerow, botanical specimens, while Clement and his fair partner were closely engaged in conversation, which appeared greatly to interest them; and before the first letters were received from the emigrants, announcing their safe arrival in Canada, the said Clement had proposed for the Rose of C——, and had been accepted by both mother and daughter.

As the young gentleman had not yet commenced business on his own account, the affair was kept a profound secret; and not even the neighbours suspected that the charming Rosamond would unite her destiny with the plain, unpretending son of the yeoman.

At length the long-expected letters from Canada arrived, and told, not only of a prosperous voyage, but of the marriage of Caroline with a young clergyman, who was going out to take charge of a parish in a long settled and prosperous part of the country. This circumstance had determined George upon purchasing a farm in the same neighbourhood. This he had accomplished upon very advantageous terms, and the whole party were so delighted with their present happiness and future prospects, that George summed up the whole, by entreating his mother and Rosamond to join them in the spring, declaring, that if his uncle were to make him his heir, upon condition of his returning and spending his days in England, he would prefer staying where he was.

Mrs. Harford was much gratified by her son's letter, and Caroline's marriage, but poor Rosamond cried for a whole hour, at the idea of their being so happy without them.

"I was so certain," she exclaimed, "that we should soon see them again! that he could not live without us. And Caroline, too,—Mrs. Hunter, I beg her ladyship's pardon,—I thought that whatever George might do, that she would return to us.—Ah! yes, I see through it all now; Caroline thought that she would not get married at home. It was only a *Marriage Speculation* after all. I wish that I was at her elbow now, how I would torment her about old maids."

"Dear Rosamond," said Annie, quite astonished at this burst of spleen. "You are quite spiteful and censorious this morning; your sister was a very lovely young woman, you could not consider her in the light of an old maid; I am only surprised that she did not marry long ago."

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"Annie, I don't mean to insinuate that Caroline was an *old maid*, (though she had a great many old maidish ways,) for she is only just two-and-twenty, but she always used to declare that she would die an old maid. Yet, you see, the very first offer she got, made her change her opinion. And for one of her severe notions, the courtship was *rather* short. I can't forget all her lectures upon propriety, maiden delicacy, &c. &c., and I am glad that she has proved in her own person, how easy it is to theorise, how difficult to practise."

"Well, Caroline is an excellent girl; I wish her happy, with my whole heart. Don't you remember, Rose, saying once upon a time, that your sister would make such a capital wife for my brother? What made you so soon alter *your opinion*?"

"I did not care for him myself, then."

"Does not your answer apply equally well to Caroline? She did not care about getting married, because she had never seen a man whom she could regard sufficiently to trust her happiness to his keeping. I know Caroline well enough to feel certain that she would not make a bad choice. But who is this coming so slowly across the lawn? Bless me, Rosamond, 'tis your uncle, Dr. Beaumont himself."

Mrs. Harford went to the door to receive her unexpected visitor. She thought that he had heard of the arrival of the foreign mail, and had slipped in to inquire after the fate of his nephew.

"This is kind, uncle," she said, placing him a large easy chair,—“an attention from you that I did not expect. I hope I see you well.”

"Yes—yes, quite well: never was better in my life," said the old man, slowly removing his clerical hat, and wiping away the perspiration which had

gathered upon his bald head. Then, letting his hat drop to the floor, and his hands rest upon his knees, he continued looking at Mrs. Harford in such a solemn, serious manner, that that lady grew alarmed, and asked, in a faltering voice, if anything had happened to distress him?

"Have you not heard the news?" he gasped out, in a sepulchral tone—"Mrs. Orams, my wife that was, died last night, in a fit of apoplexy."

An exclamation of surprise, not to say joy, burst from the three ladies.

"Yes—it's true,—a woman in the very prime of life. It should be a warning to me, and I should feel grieved for her; but, God forgive me, I can't: it is such a relief, such an emancipation from coarse, vulgar tyranny, that I could scarcely refrain from an exclamation of thankfulness, when Sally came to tell me of it this morning. Poor woman, I am sorry for her, for she was so unprepared to die, and died, I am afraid, from the combined effects of brandy and repletion; but I cannot help congratulating myself. Ah, niece, will you forget and forgive the past, and come over and help me in my distress? If you will let this place, and take charge of my house, you shall never have cause to repent the change."

This offer was too advantageous to be refused; and a few days after the funeral of the Doctor's lady, Mrs. Harford found herself established as the mistress of his spacious mansion, with every prospect of his property being secured to her family.

"Now, Clement, will be my time to propose for pretty Rose Harford," said Edward Freeburn, as they sat chatting together in the office on the sudden death of Mrs. Beaumont, and the alteration that event had made in the fortunes of the poor Harfords.

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"It will be a grand *spec.* The brother and sister are married and gone, and she will in all probability inherit her uncle's fortune."

"But do you think she will have you?" asked Clement, drily.

"Why not? I know she loved me."

"A mere fancy;—did she ever tell you so?"

"Why, no; but in a matter like this, one can scarcely be mistaken."

"You are mistaken, Edward," said Clement, rising. "Rose Harford, after the treatment she received from you, when you considered her poor and friendless, would never be your wife. She is engaged to be married to one, with her uncle's consent, who, I trust, is more worthy of her regard,—who is less gifted than you by nature, but who had the good taste and feeling to love her for herself."

"Who do you mean?" asked Freeburn, changing colour.

"Myself," said Clement, gravely.

AND HERE ENDS MY TALE.

Matrimonial Speculations.



THE MISS GREENS.

"Love is Nature's high-priest, who stands day and night in the Divine presence, offering the incense of pure hearts upon her altar. Gold may bribe man to commit treason against Nature, and by so doing, destroy the harmony of his existence ; but he cannot pervert the fidelity of Love, who only remains true to those, who dare to be true to him."

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THE MISS GREENS.

CHAPTER I.

"Die an old maid!—The thing's impossible!—
Envy suggested the ungenerous thought,
And malice gave it utterance."

"AT what age do women generally relinquish the hope of getting married?"

Verily this question might puzzle wiser and older heads than ours—although we deem ourselves very wise, and with horror behold the thatch of our upper story growing grey beneath the weight of years. The only way to come at a right solution, is by turning to the dictionary of experience, which, by-the-by, is the best teacher we ever met with, for expounding difficult problems.

A woman of real good sense, of unaffected and practical piety, who does not confine her hopes of happiness to this world, and who does not seek a husband for the mere boast of being married, but looks for a friend and intellectual teacher in the being connected in that most holy tie, relinquishes with the charms of youth, the preposterous idea of winning hearts, with those beauties of face and form, which time has already faded.

If she cannot find a kindred spirit to love, honour,

and obey, she calmly relinquishes with feminine dignity, the womanly hope so long and fondly cherished, of becoming one day a happy wife and mother, and contentedly resigns herself to her lonely lot. In the performance of acts of kindness and charity, she becomes a blessing to many of her fellow-creatures, instead of the chosen partner of one.

Her lot has its trials; but these are light when compared with the sorrows of the neglected wife—the heart-racking cares of the mother with a very numerous offspring, and a husband with very limited means. Our old maid is a female philosopher. Fortunately for the world, there are many such.

Let us, however, turn to the vain, frivolous woman, who was pretty at the outset of life, and who considers herself a beauty to the close. Ah, what a host of these women are to be met with everywhere—women who from the first, greatly overrated their personal attractions, and strengthened themselves in their vanity, with the hopes of making a *great match*—of selling bright eyes, and paper skins, to the highest bidder, rejecting suitable offers from men of their own class—their equals in rank and fortune, who were willing to take at a fair valuation the charms they possessed. In overpopulated England, such opportunities one or twice neglected, are lost for ever.

But women, such as I have described, never sink in their own estimation—never imagine that they can grow older—that there is the most remote possibility of their dying old maids. Fifty still finds them dressing, flirting, and courting admiration, still cherishing a hope, which has become forlorn and contemptible in the eyes of the other sex. They enjoy in their own opinion a perpetual youth; and when

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bright cheeks grow dull, and dark locks turn grey, they call upon art to remedy these defects, and imagine that the world is as blind to the change in their appearance as they are themselves. They know not the decorous charm of growing old "gracefully."

I knew one of these *everlasting flowers*, who was chosen by a widower with eight children, as a person of a *suitable* age to take charge of his house and large family.

The bride fancied that she was married for love. "There," she exclaimed with a air of triumph, to a female friend of her own age, who was helping her to dress on the morning of her marriage—"there, Letty, I always told you that *I* should be married before you,—that it was *impossible* for *me* to die an old maid!"

"You will certainly never die a *young one*," was the sarcastic reply.

And the bride and her cousin never met on friendly terms again.

In women of a cold phlegmatic temperament, a state of celibacy would always be preferable to this far-famed and much-coveted matrimony. But the world has attached such ridicule to the respectable name of *Old Maid*, that even those who seem meant by nature to remain single, tremble at being branded with this odious appendage.

Numbers of plain, sensible women, who should be superior to this feminine folly, give themselves a thousand affected and unbecoming airs, in the hope of securing a husband, and escaping this dreaded cognomen; while, sadder still, young, beautiful, and accomplished girls, throw themselves into the arms of age and ugliness, to obtain a home, and the right of being called Mistress So and So—excusing this

act of legal prostitution with the humiliating confession, that they did not wish to die old maids.

When will the female world grow wiser, and women adapt themselves conscientiously to the circumstances in which they are placed? If they wish to marry, to become wives and mothers, and are too poor to fulfil the great object of their being without losing caste, let them marry for love, and emigrate with the husband of their choice to those British Colonies, where education gives rank, and independence is the reward of industry.

It is easier to combat with difficulties than with the joyless regrets and disappointments of a wasted humanity.

Alas! 'tis vain to moralize upon a subject of such vital importance. As long as society retains its present organization, such evils must be. The young, the fair, the beautiful, the penniless scions of respectable families, must take the journey of life alone, until time brings about a better order of things, and a man is not afraid of incurring ruin when he marries the woman that he loves.

This long homily, however, has nothing to do with our story; which is a short, straightforward tale, collected from facts, while journeying along the great thoroughfare of life.

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CHAPTER II.

"Beauty is but skin deep—the slightest accident
May mar the fairest cheek, and bend a form
Moulded in God's own image."

SOME forty years ago, there resided in a red-brick house, in the suburbs of the pleasant seaport town of —, (no matter to what county it belonged), two middle-aged single women—for *ladies* they could not be called, who were familiarly known in that neighbourhood, as Old Polly and Liddy Green.

Gentle reader! you have heard and read of *perfect beauty*. Perhaps have been blessed with the sight of one of those magnificently-gifted and rare creatures—those pets of Nature, formed alike for envy and adoration. The thing lives not in romance alone. We have seen faces so divinely fair, that they more than realized the painter or the poet's brightest dreams—faces only seen for the passing moment, whilst hurrying along the crowded streets of the great metropolis, which have lived for ever in our memory. Such visions of beauty and power—for when was beauty ever destitute of power?—are perhaps granted us, in order to show what the human countenance was, before sin, and disease, its abhorred child, marred with their unholy seal, the glorious image of Himself stamped by the Deity on the yielding clay.

The Miss Greens did not belong to this class of favoured individuals; their celebrity lay in the opposite extreme. If ever human beings could be pro-

nounced *perfectly ugly*, they truly deserved the unenvied distinction.

The Miss Greens were, without exception, the plainest women we ever beheld. Many plain people have a charming benevolent expression, something so winning in look and manner, that it claims immediately our confidence and affection, and more than redeems from contempt the homely features; but these Miss Greens had scarcely an amiable quality to balance their amount of plainness. They were deformed both in mind and person. Providence, when it denies one blessing, generally renders to the sufferer an equivalent to counterbalance the loss; their case was an exception. These women were immensely rich.

It was a comfort to Miss Liddy, who was the elder spinster of the twain, that she was not alone in her glory—that Miss Polly shared her celebrity. It would have required a person of very nice discrimination to determine which of the nymphs was the worst looking. We, like others, have often speculated upon the subject; but never were able to arrive at a positive conclusion; we will, therefore, endeavour to make a pen and ink sketch of the charming spinsters, and leave our readers to settle in their own minds the merits of their respective claims.

At the time my history commences, Miss Liddy was fifty years of age; tall, flat, and gaunt, with a long sharp face, terminating in a lengthy curved chin, covered with sundry warts, and embellished with thick tufts of sandy hair, which looked as if nature had designed it for a handle to her countenance. Her pale blue eyes were small, deeply seated in her head, and embedded in scarlet. An awkward squint gave to these water-coloured orbs a sinister

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expression, which their heavy half-shut lids did not tend to diminish. A hare-lip, and projecting teeth, cheeks colourless, and covered with brown freckles, gave the finishing stamp of plainness to her face; a face on which the eye could not dwell with pleasure; which even to examine as a matter of curiosity, could scarcely be done without pain.

Miss Polly was ten years younger than her sister, but had an appearance of premature age. Short, broad, and hump-backed, she afforded a strange contrast to the elder in figure, still more in face. If Liddy was sallow, freckled, and seamed with the small-pox, Polly was red and swarthy, with coarse, black hair, a low forehead, thick bushy eyebrows, a large turned-up nose, and a fleshy bearded mouth.

Liddy had a timid look, like a nervous hare. Polly's expression bid defiance to the observer. Liddy fancied she was good-looking. Polly, who was the stronger-minded of the two, knew she was ugly, and did not improve the conviction, by the careless manner in which she arrayed her person.

This consciousness of deformity gave a moroseness to her look and manner; and her voice—how can mere words describe her voice! it was a combination of all discordant sounds; uniting the squalling of the peacock, the croaking of the raven, and the grunting of the pig; and yet like none of these, but a hoarse, unnatural guttural, which, when uttered suddenly, caused the listener to give a start, and turn an inquiring glance towards the quarter from whence it came, as if a voice had spoken from the nether world.

Polly Green *did* consider herself a plain woman. To any woman of common sense, the fact was too circumstantial to admit a doubt; but she concluded,

that seventy thousand pounds, and contingencies, were enough to counterbalance every personal defect to which flesh is heir. The painful consciousness of her ugliness made her more intolerable than her vain, weak sister; and added such a malignant expression to her features, that she was allowed by common consent to be the most disagreeable of the two. Though positively not uglier than Liddy, she was more generally disliked, and the greatest insult which could be offered to a plain woman in the county of — was to say, that she was as *handsome* as Miss Polly Green!

But these women were rich. The pen naturally pauses with reverence after such a declaration. The world venerates wealth; makes golden calves of it; kneels down, and worships it, under any shape and form; and Miss Polly was not so very far from the truth, when she expected it to gloss over all her imperfections. But Polly, with her worldly wisdom and purse-pride, had yet to learn that there are exceptions to every rule; that in rich, merry, aristocratic England, a ton of gold would weigh light, beside ugliness, avarice, ill-nature, and *vulgarity*. These are mountains which no golden lever has been found weighty and strong enough to remove. So repulsive were the possessors of this great wealth, that their riches awoke no feeling of envy in their poor neighbours, nor claimed for them one atom of respect more than they deserved. The poorest maiden among them would not have exchanged her comely red cheeks, to have inherited, with their fortune, Liddy's face, or Miss Polly's figure. Besides, they were low-born—no better than themselves, and had not always been the rich, miserly, Miss Greens.

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journeyman shoemaker, in their native town. The old folks, who remembered Dan Green, gave him the character of an honest, industrious man, but very penurious in his habits, and ugly enough to scare a body half out of his senses.

Though honest, Dan worked hard all his days; it seems that he died poor, having bestowed all his savings in the education of his only son, who, with his two sisters, Lydia and Mary, inherited in an eminent degree their father's penurious habits and personal defects. Disliked by his comrades for his ill-nature, and the laughing-stock of the whole school for his ugliness, Daniel the Second eagerly applied to his books, and soon became the best scholar in the village school.

The master, who was himself by no means a good-looking man, evinced a fellow-feeling for poor Dan, a sympathy for his despised humanity, which in the course of time strengthened into friendship. Finding him apt and eager, he offered to educate him gratis, provided his father would secure to him his services as an humble assistant in the school, for the next seven years, and to do any little jobs about the house. This offer was thankfully accepted by father and son; and Dan so faithfully performed his part of the contract, that it extended over a term of eighteen years, until the death of the old master placed him in the pedagogue's chair, as principal of the humble establishment.

His aged parents lived long enough to rejoice in the elevation of their son to this important post; and, after having buried them at his own charges, the dutiful Daniel took to his own home his two charming sisters, to superintend his household concerns, and render more miserable the six boarders whom he



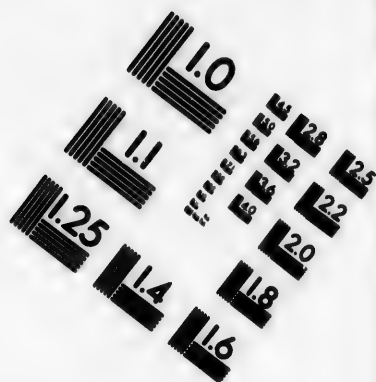
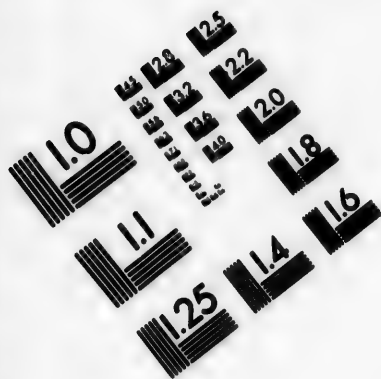
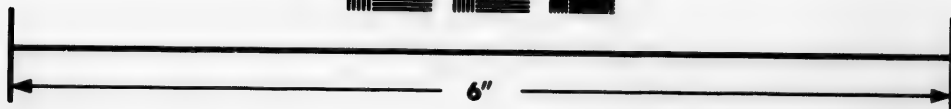
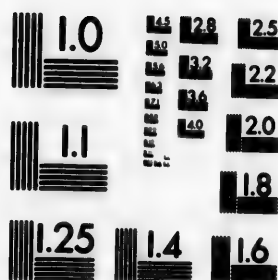


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contrived to stow away into a dilapidated nut-shell of a house, where there was scarcely room for a lean tom-cat to wave his tail gracefully, and which was dignified with the sounding title of "Academy for Young Gentlemen."

Daniel Green never married; for one very good reason, that he was so ugly that he never could prevail on any woman to accept the coarse, red, bony hand he had to bestow. Wishing to become a Benedict, in despair, he asked his predecessor's maid-of-all-work to take him for a better or worse, and the unfeeling, impudent, young jade, only laughed in his face, telling him at the same time, "That it was her intention to get a *better*, for she was very certain that it was impossible to find a *worse*."

Finding his chance of matrimony with the young, however lowly born, next to nothing, he applied himself vigorously to plain, sensible, elderly females, to whom he talked most eloquently of the beauties of the mind, but the unrefined old maids of the town of —— seemed to prefer the beauties of the body, and of these poor Dan knew himself to be wholly minus; for, to do him justice, he never attempted to conceal from himself the mortifying fact, that he was a perfect fright. Nor could he console himself, as did that traveller whom everybody knows, who enjoys a world-wide reputation, who, when examining his ugly phiz in a looking-glass, was heard to exclaim, with an air of lively self-gratulation, "Not handsome, but perfectly genteel!"

Our poor Dominie was awkward and vulgar in the extreme.

Longing for companionship, and a great admirer of the fair sex, especially of the young and pretty,

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Dan, in despair, turned Methodist preacher, as the only chance that remained to himself of obtaining a wife. The females of his flock called him a dear, good, pious, pains-taking, prayerful Christian, who was fortunately placed beyond the temptations of the flesh, set apart for a peculiar service, and wedded to the church; for what woman in her senses could think of marrying such a homely man. Wishing to interest his sisters in his matrimonial speculations, he endeavoured to convert them to his new creed; but they were too intent upon saving the ends of candles, and cribbing from the boys committed to their motherly care, to show the least concern for the salvation of their souls.

Nay, Miss Polly went so far as to say that, "As the blessings she had received from Providence were so small, her prayers would be proportionably short,—that, where little had been given, less would be required."

Miss Lydia could not believe that she inherited the family ugliness; and, in reply to her brother's pious exhortations, declared, "That she was *too* young to give up the world,—that she hoped to marry, and enjoy some of its good things, before she turned saint."

Time rolled on, and the expected wooers never made their appearance, and Miss Lydia grew older and uglier every day. Still she clung to hope, and would not relinquish the idea of getting married. Disappointment rendered her envious, discontented, and censorious, and she attributed her want of success in obtaining a husband to the malice of her neighbours,—in short, to every cause but the right one.

"Oh, if I were but *rich*!" she would cry, when-

ever the news of a wedding reached her ears, "*I too might get a husband. If I were as beautiful as an angel, without money one must die an old maid!*"

"Lord, sister!" croaked forth Miss Polly, who took a malicious pleasure in setting the elder spinster right in some particulars, "I wonder at your folly. Who the dickens would marry you?"

"Any person of taste," returned the grave, vain woman.

"Taste! He must have a very bad one who could take you for a wife. Did you ever look in the glass, Lydia?" she added, with a hoarse cackling laugh.

"You spiteful creature!" returned the irritated Lydia; "do you think my face half as ugly as your own?"

"There is a couple of us," said Polly; "so we need not quarrel on that score. I should never trouble myself to convince you that you are not a beauty, if you were not so vain, so ridiculously blind, to your own defects. When you get a husband, Liddy, I will pay for the wedding feast, and present you with a white veil to shade your delicate face."

"And pray what particular fault do you find in my face?" cried Liddy, throwing up her curved chin, and tossing back from her contracted brow the long red locks that hung over her eyes, and glancing at her tormentor with an air of high disdain.

"The fault is *general*, not *particular*," sneered Polly; "for it would puzzle a painter to point out the worst feature in your face, from your sore eyes to your peaked chin."

"Leah had tender eyes, yet she was the wife of Jacob," sobbed Miss Lydia.

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"Ay, but she did not squint. It would take a craftier person than Laban to palm you off upon any man."

"You malicious creature! Hold your spiteful tongue!" shouted the amiable Liddy, raising her lean hands to make a dash at her sister. "Oh, if I were but rich!" again sighed Lydia, sinking back in her chair, and crying aloud with vexation; "I should not be insulted by an envious hunchback like you!"

Polly could hear herself called ugly with perfect indifference; but any allusion to her deformed figure transported her into a paroxysm of rage, and seizing Lydia by the shoulder, she was about to leave a proof-impression of her ten nails on her face, when the door suddenly opened, and the grave figure of Dan Green bounded into the room. In one hand he held aloft a letter, while with the other he kept up a perpetual snapping with the thumb and forefinger, as he leaped and sprang about the carpetless floor, in a mad ecstasy of delight.

"Whew!" cried he, while his shabby black coat-tails described a circle round him at every bound. "Hallo, girls! why don't you leave off quarrelling, and listen to me. I'm a rich man,—a rich man—do you hear? Hurrah! I'll get a wife, and live in style with the best of them. Money will do wonders; it will buy everything, and I have money at last! Ha, ha, girls! why do you stand staring at me,—why don't you laugh too?" And running close up to them, he shouted in their ears—"I have got money!—money enough to buy carriages, and horses, and fine clothes—aye, and fine women to wait upon me! I shall no longer be insulted and despised for my ill-looks, and pointed at in the streets by the brazen-faced boys, and called the

devil's darning-needle, ugly Dan Green, and all that. Ha, ha! I shall be thought young and handsome, clever and fascinating—quite a lady's man! Ha, ha! a lady's man—a lady's man!"

He sank down into his old high-backed leather chair, exhausted with excitement, and gasped for breath. The man was beside himself. The sisters crowded round him.

"What has happened, Dan? Are you mad? What does all this mean?"

"I don't know," he returned, slowly.

His cheeks grew deadly pale, then livid. A cold perspiration burst out upon his forehead, his teeth chattered, and his eyes grew glazed and fixed.

"It is here—here—here," he whispered faintly, as he held the letter with a convulsive grasp. "I have it safe—quite safe. I am rich—rich—rich—im—men—se—ly—" The voice became hoarse and choaked; it suddenly ceased—the man was dead!

In the midst of their surprise and grief, the sisters did not forget to secure and read the important document, which had been the cause of their brother's frenzy and sudden death. Their surprise at its contents was as great as his; but, possessing less excitable temperaments, their joy was moderated by prudence.

The letter was from an eminent lawyer in London, communicating the unexpected, unhopèd-for intelligence, of a large fortune having been left to Daniel Green by a great uncle, of whose existence they had never before heard, who had amassed great wealth during a life-long residence in South America. In case of the said Daniel dying without lawful heirs, the enormous sum, amounting to one hundred and fifty thousand pounds, was to be equally divided

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between his surviving brothers and sisters, or their heirs.

This circumstance greatly diminished the grief of the Miss Greens for the loss of their brother. The sisters fondly imagined that they could now defy the unjust prejudices of the world, and purchase for themselves friends and admirers. Directly the funeral was over they gave up the academy, and took legal steps to claim the property; having secured this, they purchased the aforesaid red-brick house at the entrance of the town; and to the astonishment of the whole place, removed with their shabby furniture to their new dwelling.

CHAPTER III.

" To sordid souls that grovel in the dust,
 Increase of wealth adds little to their joys.
 The power of gold, to gladden and to bless,
 To garner for its owners store in heaven ;
 By bountiful bestowal here on earth,
 To sorrows, suffering children,— to their ear,
 Sounds like strange madness—worthy of the scorn
 Of all who in this world of sad extremes,
 Devoutly seek to care but for themselves."

THE red-brick house in which the Miss Greens deposited their virgin purity, was an ugly, ill-proportioned old-maidish-looking dwelling, with small narrow windows, and a large wide door. A high brick wall surrounded it on three sides, enclosing a large and productive fruit garden. Above this formidable fence, well guarded with broken glass bottles and spike-nails, luxuriant pear-trees waved their fruitful branches, and apple-trees coquettishly displayed their crimson and golden treasures, defying the artful wiles of mischievous boys, who looked and longed in vain for the forbidden fruit.

A light grass-green railing in front of the house faced the road, and afforded a glimpse of the paradise within,—a perfect Eden of currant and gooseberry bushes, from the sale of whose wholesome berries, these thrifty spinsters derived a small addition to their fat income. Never did wealth fall into the hands of people less able or willing to turn it to a good account. To them, indeed, it was a dead letter,—a talent buried in the dust,—the consciousness of its possession, being the only enjoyment these

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two gorgons derived from it. They dressed as plainly, slept as hardly, ate as frugally, and toiled as assiduously as in the day of small things. The only additional luxury that found its way into their store-room was a cask of smuggled French brandy; and to this potent spirit, it was confidently reported, that the ladies paid frequent homage.

This might be a scandal. They were too parsimonious to keep a servant; and how the public became acquainted with the fact is unknown; but as Miss Liddy's nose took a deeper tinge of crimson than was quite in keeping with the cadaverous sallow hue of her cheeks, and Miss Polly's coarse face grew redder and redder; the most conscientious retailers of gossip looked upon the matter as a fact, sufficiently proved by strong circumstantial evidence.

For some months after she became a rich woman, Miss Liddy expected that all the ladies in the town would call upon her on account of her great fortune; and the bachelors, whether young or old, would be quarrelling to obtain her hand.

Miss Liddy was a decided advocate for matrimony; and disputed half the day with the more masculine Polly, who had no maternity of feeling, and looked upon all children as pests, as to the manner in which she intended to bring up her children.

"Ay—when it shall please God to give you any," grumbled forth the amiable Polly. "Get a husband first, and we'll talk about all that afterwards."

Weeks, months, years rolled away, and the ladies of ——— did not call upon the wealthy sisters, and the gentlemen took no further notice of them, than by some passing remark to a companion on their confounded ugliness, which was gall and wormwood to Miss Liddy's sensitive mind.

The older they grew, the less popular they became. Women seldom, like wine, improve with age, without their mental and moral education has been of the highest order. The tradespeople, whom they scolded and beat down in the price of their goods, detested them; while the poor, whom they drove from their door with harsh words and cruel upbraidings, returned again to curse the niggardly creatures who denied them a trifle in charity.

Miss Lydia found out, too late in life, however, to rectify the mistake, that virtuous poverty possesses more true dignity, and commands more respect, even from the selfish time-serving world, than wealth in such hands.

Hated and hating, they shut themselves up in the deepest solitude; their ugliness and eccentricities forming a constant theme of merriment to all the juvenile idlers in the town. On the Miss Greens all practical jokes were fearlessly played. To them the most scurrilous and uncomplimentary valentines were sent, invariably directed to the *Ugliest* Miss Green; the cunning writers being on the alert to listen to the awful quarrel that the doubtful address would draw forth. When the persecuted maidens refused to take the said *billet doux* out of the post-office, duplicates were thrust under the door-sill, or tied to the knocker; and one carried his audacity so far, as to introduce into the house some abominable rhymes in dispraise of Miss Polly, tied round the neck of her lean grimalkin.

The little boys in the street, whose legs and feet had been lacerated by the broken glass and spike nails that guarded the wall that surrounded the forbidden fruit, took every opportunity of insulting and turning them into ridicule. Miss Liddy felt all

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this very keenly, while Polly only laughed at it, declaring that words were but wind, and she always turned a deaf ear to such nonsense.

Too stingy to keep a horse, and perhaps too timid to drive one, (for maiden ladies are seldom good whipps,) they daily took a constitutional drive in a donkey cart. Their Balaam was a haggard, dogged-looking beast, who, to all Miss Polly's vociferations and blows, for she was always charioteer, only shook its long ears, or kicked up its legs in defiance, without condescending to go out of its usual pace, which the parish apprentice, who acted as groom, termed "*a snail's gallop.*"

The donkey, like a wilful woman, would have its own way. Miss Polly had a strong will, but the donkey had a stronger; and they concentrated all their energies to circumvent each other.

The moment Balaam left the door with his precious freight, and passed through the garden gate into the road, the small equipage was greeted by a chorus of brays from the rude boys in the street, who crowded round the gate to see the old maids start in their donkey-chaise.

"My eye! what a turn out!" shouted the ring-leader of the ragged gang, throwing his tattered cap into the air. "There goes the finest hunter and the two *beautifullest* women in England!"

"I wish I had their chink, and the lovely dears in an oak case," cried another; "I'd make the gold fly."

Now Miss Polly dared not thrash the boys, so she vented her rising wrath upon the miserable lean donkey. Whack, whack, whack! the heavy blows fell, like hail, upon his tough leather hide.

"Go it, old Poll! lick 'un well!" cried the saucy vagabond; "the sooner you put the brute out of his

misery the better. Ar'n't ye ashamed of driving such a poor, starved-looking varmint? Why, Lor', if his bones ar'n't a' coming right through his skin."

Polly had now worked herself up into a perfect fury, and, regardless of the consequences, she stood up in the little vehicle, and laid about her stoutly with the whip, and dealt her blows so earnestly to the right and left, that she soon cleared the track.

But the mischief-loving crew hung upon the rear of the cart, like a swarm of flies, laughing at her impotent blows and threats of vengeance. They escorted the ladies out of town, and over the bridge, making a thousand provoking and impertinent remarks.

It was during one of these airings, that we happened to encounter the old maids in their humble equipage, about two miles from the town.

The donkey and Miss Polly had had a great controversy; on her part carried on with violent blows and abusive language; on his, with vicious kicks, accompanied by a downward inclination of his head, which looked sufficiently alarming. Determined at any risk to have her own way, Miss Polly rose up in the small vehicle, and began stamping at the wicked brute, and abusing him with all her might, uttering hoarse shouts, like the warning call of a peacock before rain. The donkey could not help hearing her denunciations at his evil conduct, for that voice would have made itself audible half a mile off; but, with true republican independence, he refused to obey his imperious mistress, and remained doggedly still, without stirring a step—a martyr to obstinacy, and the doctrine of free-will.

Thus matters stood for some minutes; until Miss Polly suspended her blows, from sheer inability to

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strike the brute again, until her arm recovered its strength, from the exertions she had already made, and her failing voice regained its usual dulcet tones. Cursing the stubborn beast, she once more resumed her seat.

Availing himself of this lull in the storm of blows and words, to slake his thirst (for the month was August, and the day intensely hot), Balaam made a sudden rush towards a large shallow pond by the road side, which was known in the neighbourhood as B—— Wash; and before Miss Polly could circumvent his desperate intentions, he succeeded in dragging the cart and its fair occupants into the middle of the muddy piece of water.

"Oh, Lord, sister! What's to be done?" cried the timid Lydia; "we shall both be drowned!"

"No fear of that: we shall only spoil our clothes," growled forth the baffled charioteer, sulkily; "I will soon make the brute know who is his master!"

A punch in his hollow sides, followed up by a heavy blow from the butt-end of the whip across his loins, ought to have brought the donkey to his senses, if anything could, forming as it did, a practical illustration of her benevolent threat: but down went the obstinate brute's head between his fore legs, and up into the air went his hind ones, with a force and energy which nearly succeeded in kicking to pieces the dash board of the frail vehicle.

The donkey wanted to drink, and drink he would, in spite of Miss Polly's opposition to his wishes, and her manlike abuse of power. The situation of the ladies was not only unpleasant, but really critical; and they heartily wished the donkey and themselves safe in the middle of the dusty road.

They were roused from contemplating the danger of a ducking, by a loud burst of laughter from the bank above the pond; and perched upon its highest summit, far above their heads, and pointing with eyes brim-full of mischief to the group below him, they spied a stout, rosy, bare-footed urchin, of some twelve years, or thereabouts.

"What are you laughing at, you fool?" cried the irritated Polly, shaking her whip at the delinquent.

"At you, ma'am," returned the imp, bursting into a fresh shout of merriment; "and if you don't get out of that soon, my sides 'ill bust." Here a fresh explosion followed, which made Balaam prick up his ears, and leave off drawing the water into his mouth.

"Why, the jackass is going to laugh at you, missus; I'll be blowed if he aint."

"Boy," croaked forth Miss Liddy, who did not at all relish her present position, "if you will make the beast get out of the pond, I'll give you a penny."

"Ha! ha! ha!" roared the boy.

"A penny!" screamed Miss Lydia, fancying the child had not heard her distinctly.

"I hears ye, ma'am; I'se not deaf."

"Pull the donkey into the road, and I'll pay you on the spot."

"Lord bless you, and your charity, old lady. A penny—a *whole* penny for getting my clothes wet. Ha! ha! ha! don't you take me for a fool? Ha! ha! ha!"

Lydia was dreadfully provoked at the lad's impertinence. The term *old* always occasioned an hysterical swelling in her throat, which was apt to explode in a torrent of angry words; but this time she prudently suppressed her rage, as she was becoming

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nervously anxious to be safe out of the pond, especially as the beast began kicking so vigorously, that he splashed the muddy water into her face. "Twopence, my good lad; I'll give you twopence."

"It's no go, marm," said the impish boy, nodding his head to one side, and giving her a knowing wink, with his saucy black eyes; then uttering a wild shout, he tossed the tattered remains of his straw hat high into the air, and, as it again descended to the earth, he reversed the natural order of things, by making his bare foot perform the office of his hand, in sending it again in its upward flight. The boy found that he was on the right side of the hedge, and was determined to make the most of his position.

"It's brave hot weather, old ladies; you may as well make up your minds to stay there all night. That 'ere squinter to the right looks in a terrible passion; the water, maybe, will help to cool her."

"I wish you were within reach of my whip, you impertinent young rascal," screamed Miss Polly, shaking the offensive weapon at him; "I'd teach you to speak civilly to your betters."

"Nay, missus; keep your blows for the jackass. He'll need 'em all afore you gets he out of the pond. You had better not go to attempt to strike me, or you'll get the worser of it."

The donkey having refreshed himself, showed strong symptoms of wishing to lie down and wash the dust from his coat, by a good roll in the water.

"Boy! boy!" shrieked Miss Lydia, who was certainly the most feminine biped of the two; "if you will but get us safely out of this horrid place, I'll give you sixpence!"

"Sixpence! is the woman mad?" cried Miss Polly, turning to her sister, with a face scarlet from

excitement. "Ar'n't you ashamed of offering such a large sum to the young ruffian, for doing what his own good feelings, if he had any, should prompt him to do unasked?"

"I can't stay here all night," croaked forth poor Lydia, in a deprecating and terrified voice.

"Nonsense! Here are people coming along the road who will help us out for nothing."

"Two girls in white dresses," and Lydia shrugged her shoulders. "Much benefit we can derive from their assistance. Do you think it at all likely, sister, that they will soil their clothes to drag that brute out of the water?"

"Perhaps not. But I would suffer everything, rather than reward that young rascal for his impudence."

The boy, who was listening intently to the controversy between the amiable pair, "To give, or not to give," began to fear that he was losing ground, and that it was better to strike while the iron was hot, and, taking advantage of the suspicious movements of the ass, he cried out in a tone of alarm—

"Look out! look out! The jackass is now a-going to lie down in the water. My eye! how wicked he do look. He will kick the bottom right out of the old rattle-trap, and then ye'll both be dished."

"Quick! quick!" squalled Miss Lydia. "Come down from the bank, boy, and drag him out."

"Hi! hi! Missus. I knows vot's vot. You don't catch me budging a foot till I feels the weight of the sixpence."

Miss Lydia, trembling with apprehension, fumbled in her pocket, from whose depths she dragged a crooked sixpence into the light, and held it up to the astonished gaze of the lad, who, in spite of all

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his impudence, could scarcely credit his good fortune, when coming through such a channel. Joy gleamed in his sparkling eyes, and dimpled over his jolly, sun-burned face. He sprang down from his elevated perch on the top of the bank, to the step of the cart, like a hawk pouncing upon a sparrow, and received the donation with a grin, which showed his white teeth to the uttermost.

"Thankee, ma'am," tugging his forelock, by way of a bow, "I hope you 'ont die arter it. And now I'll see what I can do."

Regaining with a bound his former position on the bank, he tore from the moist yielding soil a huge plant of the giant mullion, which lifted its tall head above the gay poppies and rugwort that grew in profusion on the spot, and threw it, with the large clod of earth that still adhered to its roots, with all his strength at the donkey's head. Unaccustomed to such a novel mode of treatment, and frightened out of his wits, the astonished animal leaped suddenly to one side. The wheel of the cart came in contact with a large stone, and the terrified old maids were precipitated into the water, while Balaam, without waiting to contemplate the ruin he had wrought, fled on the wings of the wind towards his own home, leaving a dense cloud of dust to mark his precipitate retreat.

The water, fortunately, was too shallow to do them any injury, but they got a good ducking, to the infinite delight of the imp who had caused the confusion; who, instead of coming to their assistance, ran off at full speed, shouting, at the very top of his voice :—

"Put your hats on,
 • Keep your heads warm;
 A little more water won't do you no harm."

Miss Polly rose from the water, (not like a second Venus from the sea,) and seizing the more helpless Lydia by her shoulders, dragged her out.

"Oh! oh!" groaned Lydia, sitting down on the grass, and sinking her head between her knees;
 "oh, that wretch of a boy!"

"Sister, are you hurt?" screamed Polly in her ears.

"Hurt!" cried Lydia.

"Yes, hurt; are any of your bones broken?"

"I don't know," said Lydia, feeling herself in all directions; "I think I'm all right."

"Then what do you mean by making such a squalling?—frightening one out of one's wits!"

"I was thinking of the sixpence he cheated me out of. Is there no way to recover it?"

"None," growled Polly. "You'll get cold, Liddy, if you sit here in your wet clothes. Get up and go home."

With crushed bonnets, dripping garments, and rueful visages, the amiable pair moved homeward; and as they left the scene, a wild roar of laughter, and a vicious clapping of hands, sounded from the other side of the hedge. Miss Polly turned, and shook the whip she still grasped in her hand, defiantly, but the goblin had vanished.

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CHAPTER IV.

"What, twice a widower—and wilt thou thrust
Thy neck a third time in the marriage noose?
Go to—and bless thyself—thou fortunate,
Who hast escaped such evils and come safe."

A GREAT poet has declared—

"No goose so grey—but soon or late,
Will find some honest gander for a mate."

It may be so—our geese were very grey, and they waited a long time before any gander was goose enough to find them.

In the same town that had the honour of giving birth to these remarkable women, who would have made Barnum's fortune, had his collection of natural curiosities existed in their day, there lived a reckless, roystering, handsome, ne'er-do-well fellow, called John Andrews. He was, however, no way related, that ever we heard of, to the immortal Pamela of Richardson, or the no less celebrated Joseph, who figures as the hero of Smollett's humorous novel that bears his name. Both these worthies were the mirrors of propriety—the very pinks of perfection. Our John was the most imprudent, thoughtless creature in creation. His father had followed the profession of a barber, in the town of ———, and John, from choice, was early apprenticed to the same calling. Old John, who was a good-natured, obliging fellow, but rather pompous withal, was known to the inhabitants of

the place as *Emperor of Banbury*—a high-sounding title, which had been conferred upon him by some wicked wag who frequented his shop. The ladies, improving upon the joke, called the younger John, the *Heir Apparent*. Possessing a natural taste for genteel society, John exclusively devoted himself to the fair sex, preferring their soft, flowing tresses, to the harsh, stumpy beards of the men: reserving the cutting and curling of the former entirely to himself, and leaving to his venerable progenitor, all the mysteries of the strop and razor. His handsome person, and frank, agreeable manners, soon won for him the good-will of all his female customers, who lost no opportunity of running over to his tasteful little shop, on pretence of making some trifling purchase among his highly-scented wares, but in reality, to enjoy a lively chat with the comely young hair-dresser. Barber—faugh! The very word applied to such a pretty young man as John Andrews, was a misnomer. There was nothing barbarous about him. He had such taste in curling and arranging a fine feminine head of air, and was so patient and obliging, that the prettiest heads in the town daily passed between his large, soft, white hands, and John so well improved the opportunity afforded him of breathing soft flatteries into a gentle ear, that he persuaded Miss Lilack, the prettiest girl in the town, who had just come down from London and opened a natty little milliner's shop in Front-street, on her own account, to accept his hand.

Miss Lilack had made up her mind before John popped the question, though she feigned some reluctance in accepting the offer she had eagerly anticipated.

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John was not easily intimidated. Three years' practice upon heads had given him a wonderful knowledge of character. He might have been called a practical phrenologist, though it is very certain John had never heard of such a science as phrenology, and would not have been able to have read the word had it been displayed in the largest type before him, still less to comprehend its meaning. But he knew, without feeling the bumps in her cranium, that Kitty had a regard for him, however demurely she had tried to keep the secret to herself. It was in vain that she called him "a hateful man—a saucy impertinent fellow, whom she detested with all her heart and soul!" John did not believe a word of it. He told her so. She tossed her pretty head disdainfully. He laughed at her. She pouted out her rosy little mouth, and he caught her in his arms and kissed it into a smile. Still the coquettish damsel refused to give him a definite answer. Like a cat with a poor tormented mouse in its ruthless claws, who will neither kill it nor let it go—she made sport of his anxiety.

John bore it very patiently, and, unlike the mouse, made not the least effort to escape, but one day while he was dressing her flowing auburn tresses, previously to her appearing at the tradesman's ball in ———, where she was certain to be the belle, he suddenly pulled her head back upon his breast, and swore, with a pretty lover's oath, while he flourished his comb aloft in the air, that he would never let her head out of his hands, or part with one lock of her lovely hair, until she promised to become his wife.

This was taking pretty Kate at a very unfair advantage, and she begged pathetically that he would

release her head; but this he refused to do, until, with many tears and blushes, she offered her heart in exchange; and the delighted John sealed the compact upon her lips.

She, in her turn, demanded a sacrifice—John must give up his vulgar, low calling—Miss Catherine Lilack could not consent to be a *Barber's* wife.

"*Hairdresser*, my love," said John, who, until that moment, had felt proud of his calling.

"*Hairdresser*," said Kate, laughing; "who thinks of troubling themselves with that long affectation? No one dreams of calling you anything but the barber. Have I not heard the girls in my establishment call you the handsome young *Barber*,—a thousand times? but I never knew one of them, but Miss Pike, who you know is an ugly old maid, and they always mince their words to be thought very genteel, call you *Mr. Andrews, the hairdresser*. If you wish to marry me, John, you must choose another trade."

Poor John did not half relish the proposal. But he was in love, and men in love are apt to do very foolish things; so he gave up his employment, with which he was well acquainted, and in which he enjoyed a certain degree of celebrity, to enter upon a business of which he knew nothing, and for which he was not in the least qualified, in order to meet the wishes of his pretty sweetheart. John relinquished the scissors and curling tongs, and began life anew, with his charming Kate, as a corn-merchant.

In spite of his ignorance of the trade, John got on tolerably well in his new calling, and made sundry fortunate speculations, more, however, by good luck than good management, which greatly raised him in the estimation of his neighbours. Mrs. Andrews was fond of making a dash; she loved to dress well,

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and to have everything nice about her; and she soon had her tea-parlour, and her visitors to fill the said parlour; for what was the use of having nice furniture and a carpeted room, if she was not to show it and share its luxuries with others.

The miller's wife, who was reckoned quite a genteel body, whose father was a wealthy yeoman, had condescended to take tea with Mrs. Andrews, and her example was followed by most of the respectable tradespeople in the town; wine of course had to be furnished, and a variety of cakes made in order to treat the great folks, for so they were deemed by Kate and her good-natured husband; and if the latter made anything by a good cargo of wheat, his pretty wife knew how to dispose of it without troubling the banks.

Debts began to accumulate, and John began to suspect that they were living *rather* too fast, when the dear cause of all this expenditure died of inflammation in the lungs, brought on by her own imprudence, in going into the open air to cool herself, after having danced herself into a great heat, leaving John half beside himself with grief, and two infant sons to lament her loss. John cried heartily until after the funeral, rejected his food, and refused to be comforted, declaring, that "he should soon follow his beloved Kitty to the grave."

An Englishman in that class cannot fast long. John grew hungry at last, and with his appetite his usual spirits returned.

"Poor Kitty!" he cried, wiping his eyes for the last time, and helping himself liberally to a large mess of beans and bacon; "fretting won't bring her back. It is the Lord's doing, and as He knew best, it is my duty to make myself as comfortable as I can.

Had I been consulted in the matter she would now be sitting in her own chair at the head of the table. By George! how she would have enjoyed this fine bacon—and them beans are biled to a turn.”

And the disconsolate widower plunged into the dish with such a full appreciation of its merits, that he vowed that old Deb (his maiden sister) was as good a cook as Kitty, and with her to keep house for him, he should get along almost as well as if she were still alive.

Alas! the inconstancy of man. This was really a practical illustration of the barbarous Italian proverb,

“Sorrow for a dead woman goes no further than the door.”

To do John justice, he had loved his wife very sincerely, and had she been still alive he would have loved her still; but it was impossible for him to grieve long about anything, and feeling rather lonely he determined to take to himself another wife as soon as he could meet with a woman to his taste.

But these matrimonial speculations were sadly interrupted by the failure of the house in London with which Andrews transacted business, and to which he had consigned, only a few days before, a fine cargo of old wheat. John was a ruined man, and to console himself for this last misfortune, he spent the last shilling he had in a tumbler of hot brandy-and-water, in order to drive away care, he said, and look the demon of poverty steadily in the face.

As he returned the empty glass to the table, wishing that, like the miraculous purse of Fortunatus, it had possessed the power of replenishing itself, his eye fell upon the mistress of the house; a handsome widow of thirty, who had only been a few weeks

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settled among them, and who was reported to have a snug little property of her own; and the question suddenly presented itself to his mind—"What if she would have me? Hang me! I've a great notion to pop the question—I can but be refused."

The widow, in the meanwhile, had remarked that her customer was a very comely man. Her late husband had been old and ugly. The widow had a great admiration for handsome men, and she thought it was a pity that a young fellow, who possessed so many personal advantages, and had such prepossessing manners, should long remain single. So she asked him, just by the way of inquiry, as he stood lounging irresolutely against the bar, "Why he did not marry again?"

"So I would," quoth John; "if I could get any one to have me," and he looked unutterably soft things at the widow.

"Bless me!" said she: "is that the only difficulty?" laughing as if in jest, but serious at heart all the while. "If no one will take compassion upon you, I am half inclined to have you myself."

"Will you, though?" cried John, flinging his arms about her white neck, and giving her a hearty kiss at the same time; "then you are a dear lovely woman, for whom I have been dying for the last three months."

John, by the way, had never seen Mrs. Roper before, but he thought it as well to improve his advantage with a white lie. "You have made me, my angel, the happiest of men."

The widow took all this for gospel. She was not a little vain of her beauty, and was apt to imagine that every man who spoke civilly to her was a lover. She was not at all displeased with John's declaration,

and in the softest voice in the world, she invited him to step into her little parlour and take a cup of tea with her; leaving her maid, Betty Rous, to superintend the affairs of the bar.

John and the handsome widow extended their conversation far into the night, and before they parted, Mrs. Roper had not only promised to become his wife at the shortest possible notice, but to be a tender mother to his children; and the corn-merchant retired to his lonely couch, intoxicated with his good fortune.

The life of a publican was the very worst that could have fallen to the lot of John Andrews. He was not exactly a drunkard, but was fond of dissipation, and especially of gambling on a small scale. The idle lounging life he led tended greatly to fasten these unfortunate propensities. Present comfort and enjoyment engrossed all his thoughts, and he never troubled himself to make the least provision for the morrow.

His wife was a kind easy soul, brimful of fun and good humour. She loved her handsome husband with all her heart, and took more pains in pleasing him than in attending to her pecuniary affairs. They had an excellent business, and she concluded that John was more competent to look after it than she was. Poor soul, she did not suspect that he spent at the card-table all the money that was made in the bar-room. He was generous and indulgent to her, and she was quite happy; and contrasting his pleasant ways, with the sullen suspicious disposition of her former lord, who scolded and found fault with her from morning till night, she thought herself the most fortunate woman on earth. Nor was she ever undeceived. During the first year of their marriage,

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she brought the delighted husband another fine boy, to increase the family stock, but died a few weeks after his birth, happily unconscious of the ruin which was even then impending over him.

This was a sad blow to John Andrews. He felt it more keenly than the death of his first love. Kate had been the woman of his choice; but his sprightly black-eyed Maria had idolized him, and dearly he missed the thousand little attentions to his comfort, the administration of which had been the joy of her life.

A few months after her death, the well-appointed home which he had received with her in marriage, with all its effects, was brought to the hammer; and the amount of the sale was barely sufficient to satisfy the demands of his creditors; and John was once more cast upon the world to pick up a living for himself and three young children.

It was the night after the auction. Poor Andrews sat alone in the little back parlour, where he had taken the first cup of tea with Maria, and subsequently had spent with her many happy hours. The room was now unfurnished, the floor uncarpeted, and no cheerful fire shed a pleasant gleam from the cold black grate. No friendly face smiled on him, or tried with soothing words to comfort his distress. The hungry children had retired with Aunt Deb, cold and cross, to bed. They were to quit the house on the morrow; and John, in spite of his carelessness about the future, sat listlessly pondering over his unpleasant situation, and wondering what upon earth he should do.

"I have been devilish unlucky in wives," said he to himself. "I have lost two excellent ones, in less time than most fellows are in finding one. If either

of them had lived, I should not have been brought to this pass." John seized the poker and gave the dead coals a vigorous thrust, but no flame sprang up from the dead embers to lighten the gloom of the dusty apartment, or his sombre thoughts; and he moodily continued the retrospection of his married life.

"Kitty was a beauty,—that's a fact; but she was rather extravagant, and too fond of her own way. 'Twas she first unsettled me, by urging me to undertake that corn business, for which I was as little fitted as Tinker the dog; but I did it to please her. And when she died, I must have gone to gaol, had not Maria come like a godsend between me and ruin. Maria, dear, good soul! how I miss her! She was a perfect jewel of a woman. But what's gone is gone,—tears won't bring her back; and the very best thing I can do will be to marry again."

John leant back in his chair, threw his hands behind his head, and his eyes up to the smoky rafters, and heaved a sigh from the depths of his wide chest, that resembled the hoarse respirations of an engine letting off steam.

"I wonder if I could get another wife. I never did ask a woman to have me and was refused. I was just as badly off when Maria took me. It would do me no harm to try again,—a refusal breaks no bones. To marry a woman with a good pocket would be the easiest way for a lazy chap like me to get along.

"Let me see. What likely people are there in the neighbourhood? There's the widow Jones: she has a little shop, and the premises and stock are her own. But then, she has five rude boys to maintain; and with my three—none of the quietest or most orderly—we should have fine times. No, no, that

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"Then there is old Miss Watley, farmer Watley's sister. She has three hundred pounds of her own. She would be deuced glad to take me, for she hinted as much a short time after Kitty died; but then she wants all the cash settled upon herself. No, John Andrews, the woman that trusts herself to your keeping, must trust her money also. No separate interests for me in the firm of matrimony. I must be the principal, not the mere sleeping partner."

"Have you forgotten the Miss Greens, man?" whispered a laughing voice in his ear. John sprang up, and seizing the hand of the speaker, gave it a long hearty shake, exclaiming all the while—

"My dear Ben, how glad I am to see you. How glad, how very glad I am to see you!"

The intruder was a tall, manly looking fellow, with an honest, homely countenance, beaming with kindness. He returned the poor widower's cordial greeting with interest; then glancing round the dingy apartment, said with a half smile,—

"Come, Andrews, don't sit moping here; come over to my house, and we will talk over your affairs, with a good fire to cheer our eyes, and a glass of hot brandy and water to warm our hearts. I have a famous plan in my head for you."

"Ben Boyce, you are a true friend," cried Andrews, taking up his hat from the window-sill. "I *do* feel confoundedly dull to-night. Let us be going. I long to see your bright fire, and to taste your comforting draught."

"And to talk over the wedding. Ha! John?"

They crossed the street, and entered a neat little house, the mirror of cleanliness and comfort.

"Your wife keeps everything snug and neat," said John, with a sigh.

"Yes, yes—a good useful body; but rather old," he added in a whisper. "I did not marry for love, you know. She had a little money, which I wanted badly enough, and she wanted a husband. A fair exchange, you know; and both are satisfied. She makes a good economical wife; and I try to be a kind husband. She seldom scolds me, unless I imprudently praise some pretty little girl, whom she stigmatizes as a perfect *fright*; and then her wrath bursts upon me like a hurricane. I endure the storm patiently, and we go on pretty well, until the next blunder. But hush, man, here she comes."

Mrs. Ben Boyce, a thin, long-faced, prim-looking little woman, with very sharp black eyes, and scrupulously neat, walked stiffly into the room, and glanced a sour greeting towards her husband's visitor. There are some persons who can open a door so repulsively, that it seems to forbid an entrance to an unwelcome guest, without requiring the aid of words. Others who enter a room with such a chilling air, that its unfortunate occupants would find it true wisdom to vacate it as soon as they could.

John half suspected that he was deemed an intruder by the mistress of the house; but as he was loth to leave the cozy fireside, and, above all, the promised glass of brandy and water, he determined to pocket his pride, and do his very best to mollify the inhospitable aspect of his friend's wife.

He rose, and politely proffered her his chair, while in the blandest manner he made the usual inquiries after the health of herself and family.

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ous reply, and without taking the chair he offered, remarked in a very blunt manner,—

"It is late, is it not, Mr. Andrews?"

"Just eight, ma'am, by the town clock." Poor John's watch, of which he was once so proud, had been sold for the benefit of his creditors.

"Time for all honest family men to be in their beds. We are very early risers, Mr. Andrews."

"A good custom. A very good custom," said John, who began to perceive the good lady's drift; and in spite of the warm fire and the anticipated treat, wished himself once more in his desolate home.

"It is a good custom, sir, and one which I think ought not to be broken. And you know, Mr. Andrews, we cannot rise early, if we go late to bed."

"I have business with my friend Andrews to-night, wife," said the young husband, fidgeting uneasily on his chair.

"So I perceive," returned Mrs. Boyce, glancing sarcastically at the hot brandy punch. "I hope, Mr. Boyce, you will get through with it before morning, as I never can sleep, and that you well know, until after you come to bed."

"I hope you will not deprive us of the pleasure of your company, ma'am," said John, with a smile, which his two wives had found irresistible. "I assure you, I have no secrets from the wife of my friend."

Greatly softened by this speech, for John had an Irish turn for the blarney, Mrs. Boyce, with a dignified inclination of her smart cap, took the chair which he had been twirling during their dubious colloquy in his hand; while Ben, who knew at a glance that his better half was coming round, tendered her the glass of hot punch he had just mixed for himself,

exclaiming in a jovial tone—"That's right, Jane, my angel! You are such a dear, kind soul, you know it is impossible for me to enjoy anything without *you*!"

"Don't be foolish, Ben," cried his sour-faced dame, with a grim smile. "There are times and seasons for all things," and she drew herself up, and smoothed down the folds of her black silk apron. Then turning suddenly to her visitor, and fixing upon him her keen, inquisitive eyes, she said—"What were you remarking to Benjamin when I came in, Mr. Andrews?"

"I was admiring the beautiful order and neatness of your house, ma'am, and congratulating my friend Benjamin on his possessing such an excellent wife," returned the ready John.

"Ahem!" said Mrs. Boyce, glancing towards her husband, and complacently sipping her hot brandy and water. "I wish you could bring Mr. Boyce to your way of thinking. But a prophet has no honour, still less a wife, Mr. Andrews, among her own people. But come, sir, let us have the news. What is your business with my husband to-night? No borrowing of money—no endorsing of bills, I hope?"

Andrews expressed the most pious horror at such proceedings; and Mrs. Boyce, whose heart began to expand beneath the genial influence of the hot punch, grew more and more reconciled to his visit.

"You see, wife," commenced Ben Boyce, who was longing for an opportunity to introduce the plan he had formed to extricate his friend from his present pecuniary difficulties, "Mr. Andrews has been very unfortunate, and the only way to help him out of his present strait, is to assist him in getting a rich wife. You are such a clever, prudent woman, that we must have your advice on this important subject."

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"Why surely, Mr. Andrews," cried the lady, turning sharply upon her guest, "you are not so cruel as to think of marrying again? Your poor, dear wife is scarcely cold in her grave. Oh! the hardheartedness of men! it beats all. I have no patience with such unfeeling conduct."

"Ah, my dear madam, be not too hard upon me," said the poor ex-publican. "I was so comfortable in the married state, and feel so deeply the want of some lovely woman to order my house, and soothe my cares, that it is perfectly natural I should wish to marry again."

"Now, Jane, is not that a compliment to the sex?" cried Ben soothingly; "and coming too from a man that has been twice married."

"I should think it no compliment, Benjamin, your marrying again a few weeks after I had been put in my coffin," said Mrs. Ben sullenly.

"If I should be so unfortunate as to lose you, my dear—which God forbid!—I should certainly pay that respect to your memory," returned Ben, winking slyly to Andrews, "just to show to the world my esteem for the married state."

"Then I will live as long as I can, in order to disappoint you, Mr. Boyce!" cried his wife, flouncing round in her chair. "I think it perfectly indecent of Mr. Andrews talking of marrying so soon after his wife's death."

"You forget, Mrs. Boyce, that I have three little orphan children—one an infant—who stand greatly in need of a mother's care," said John.

"Especially a step-mother's," returned Mrs. Boyce, bitterly. "No, no, Mr. Andrews, that excuse won't do; you had much better hire a good nurse."

"But, my dear lady; consider my circumstances."

"If report says true, they are bad enough. But, Mr. Andrews, if you cannot afford to pay for a nurse, how in the name of wonder could you manage to support a wife?"

"Ah! my dear Madam, you come now to the point. I want a wife to support me."

"Very reasonable that," said Mrs. Boyce; "and pray what have you to give the poor woman in exchange for her money?"

"Is he not a devilish handsome fellow, wife?" said Ben. "Is there not plenty of women to take him at his own price? Did not you marry me when I was as poor as John; and was I comparable with him?"

"Oh, I was a foolish young creature," whispered Mrs. Boyce (she was on the wrong side of thirty when Ben married her); "I was afraid that you would do yourself some mischief if I refused you, and took you out of compassion. I should be wiser now, having found out that love is a malady of which few die, especially men, to whom the disease called a broken heart is unknown. But who is the woman that Mr. Andrews wishes to *honour*, by making her his third wife!"

"How bitter you are, wife!" cried Ben, growing tired of acting the amiable. "One would think, to hear you talk, that you were some disappointed, sour old maid, not an honest fellow's wife, and the mother of two of the prettiest children in ——"

"The prettiest, Mr. Boyce," said his wife, with dignity.

"Well, I have no objection, we won't quarrel for a word."

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told me who she is, and I am dying with curiosity," said Mrs. Boyce, turning again to Andrews.

"One for whom he certainly will never die for love!" cried Ben, giving full vent to the laugh which he, with difficulty, had suppressed during his wife's cross-questioning. "What think you, Jane, of one of our charming neighbours, the Miss Greens?"

"Good heavens! the man's mad!" cried Mrs. Boyce, holding up her hands in horror. "The women are not women, they are almost monsters!"

"Not likely to refuse a good offer."

"The frightful creatures!"

"That's no fault of theirs, wife; ugly as they are, they did not make themselves."

"Hold your foolish tongue, Ben; God did not make them ill-natured and disgusting."

"Tut! tut! woman, they are rich."

"Rich! Had they twice as much money, they could never bribe a man to make them an offer. Mr. Andrews could never control his feelings to make either of them his wife."

"He must shut his eyes and think of the seventy-five thousand pounds, that each of the charmers has at her own disposal, and they will cease to be ugly in his estimation. 'Gad! if I were single, I would make one of them an offer to-morrow."

"*Mr. Boyce,*" said his wife, reproachfully; "what do you mean?"

"What I say, my dear; such a fortune is not to be sneezed at, or met with every day."

"Are the ladies so very ugly?" asked John, and a tender recollection of his two very pretty wives stole sadly into his breast. "I must confess that

I never looked at them particularly. The money is, however, a great inducement; perhaps they might improve upon further acquaintance."

"Well, man, you can take your choice," said Mrs. Boyce, laughing. "I am certain you have only to ask to be accepted; for I suppose, you are the only man who ever had the courage to think of asking them, and I would lay any wager that your heart will fail you in the attempt."

"Don't mind her, Andrews; try, my boy, try; and let those laugh who win. Which of the two old maids, Jane, should you consider the most likely to prove kind?"

"Liddy is the most human of the two, and out of two evils, would certainly be my choice; and I would insist, Mr. Andrews, in her settling all her money upon yourself."

"She cannot do that," said Ben Boyce. "If she dies without children—and she must be long past that—all her money goes to Miss Polly."

"Then make a dash at Miss Polly, friend Andrews. A hundred and fifty thousand pounds is a great deal of money. One year's income would make you a rich man."

"By George! it's worth the sacrifice," said Andrews, draining his glass, as glorious visions of wealth and importance floated vividly through his brain. "I can afford to keep a raree show enclosed in such a case."

"A female ourang-outang," observed Mrs. Boyce.

"Now, wife, don't be so satirical. We would all be handsome if we could. But I forgot to tell you, John—they both drink like fishes."

"The deuce they do! Well, so much the better

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for me. I will indulge their spiritual tastes to the uttermost. I will keep a cask of brandy in my bed-chamber."

"Mr. Andrews, how little you know of women!" cried Mrs. Boyce. "If you wish to get rid of them, that would be the very way to defeat yourself, and effect their cure."

"How so, my dear madam?"

"They would imagine you did it on purpose to kill them, and would grow sober out of sheer contradiction."

"Listen to my wife, John. She understands her own sex better than we do. But when do you think of making your offer?"

"Now, when the iron's hot. They live next door. I'll take them by surprise. I'll pop the question this very night."

"Take another glass before you go, John," said Ben, who greatly relished the joke, pouring him out a fresh bumper.

"And mind, Mr. Andrews, that you come back and tell us how you sped in the wooing. I shall be dying with curiosity until I hear all about it."

"But it is so *late*, ma'am: I should be sorry to keep you so long out of your bed."

"Oh, I don't mind sitting up to hear good news of my friends," said Mrs. Boyce. "Ben and I will talk the matter over until you return."

And with a head none of the clearest, and his spirits excited to the most extravagant pitch, John Andrews sallied forth upon his matrimonial expedition.

CHAPTER V.

"I fain would qualify my daring suit,
By making love its object and reward—
I cannot do it—the dishonour'd word
Sticks in my throat, and nature gives the lie
To my profession."

Miss LIDDY and Polly Green had just mixed for themselves a drop of comfort preparatory to their retiring to bed. Miss Liddy, with her clothes loosened, and her nightcap on, was comfortably ensconced in the high-backed leathern chair, in which her brother died, with her feet on the fender, and her hands on her knees, her figure bent forward, in order to enjoy the benefit of the hot cinders, that still glimmered redly in the small grate.

A lean tom-cat was lying upon the threadbare rug at her feet, and the little black tea-kettle was drumming lazily upon the fire.

"A *leetle*—a very *lee-tle* more brandy, Polly," she said, sipping from a large tumbler of hot stuff that she held in her hand: "I can't taste anything but the nutmeg and sugar in this. To-morrow night I'll mix for myself. You grow so stingy, that one goes every night cold to bed. I have no notion of stinting myself to thimblefuls. I wonder whether your own glass tastes as little of the brandy as mine?"

Miss Polly was standing before an old cupboard, with her back towards her sister, the better to conceal the fact that she was conveying some of the contents of the square black bottle that she was

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returning to the case, down her own throat almost choking in her haste to swallow, undetected, the delicious draught, for Polly heartily subscribed to the advice delivered by Ben Backstay's inimitable ghost—

"Oh never mix your liquor, boys,
But always drink it neat."

But, in order to save appearances, she now turned to her sister, and croaked out, in her most discordant voice,—

"Tut, woman! hold your tongue. I gave you as much brandy as I gave myself. But you are so greedy, you are never satisfied. If you get any more to-night, you will go tipsy to bed."

"It's very cold, Polly," said the elder woman, spreading her hands to the hot ashes, and raising her dress to give her ankles the benefit of the fire. "I want something to warm me before going to bed."

"You've had enough," growled Polly.

"Just a *leetle* drop more,"—holding the glass towards her.

"You shan't have it, I tell you!"

"You have no right to withhold it. I will have as much as I please," cried Liddy, leaving her chair, and making a few steps in advance.

"You mustn't!" said Polly, turning the key of the cupboard with a sharp click, and putting it into her pocket. "So now sit down, and make yourself easy. If I were to let you have your own way, I should be sole heiress of the property in less than a month."

At this moment a modest rap at the street-door made both sisters start, and Liddy hastily gathered her loosened garments about her, and sank down into the old chair.

"Was that at our door, sister?"

"I think so."

"Gracious! who can be wanting us at this hour of the night?"

"It may be a thief coming to rob the house, and who takes this method to obtain admittance."

"Lord! sister, I forgot to pass the bolt—quick, I am undressed. Do not open the door, as you value our lives."

While this colloquy was going on in the parlour, John Andrews, who was growing very impatient and pot-valiant, and withal tired of knocking so often without receiving an answer, finding the door on the latch, gently unclosed it, and, stepping into the passage, he rapped very decidedly at the door of the room which happened to be occupied by the persons he sought.

"Are either of the Miss Greens at home?"

"What do you want with the Miss Greens?" demanded Polly, putting her back against the door.

"I want to speak to them on very particular business."

"Then come to-morrow. The Miss Greens transact no business with men at night."

"Do not be alarmed, ladies. I am a friend and neighbour, John Andrews, at your service—open the door, and allow me five minutes' private conversation."

"We owe him for the last brandy, Polly," whispered Miss Lydia, removing her nightcap, and re-adjusting her clothes. "He is a very civil handsome man; you had better let him in."

"This is no hour for paying accounts," returned Polly. "I bought an old tea-tray at his sale this morning. He leaves town to-morrow, so I suppose he wants the money. I hope he has brought a

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receipt with him, for I will not find him one on his own business, I can tell him."

Then carefully unclosing the door, she admitted the unwelcome intruder, observing as she did so,—

"You need not have been in such a hurry for your money, Mr. Andrews, we should not have run away."

"Ladies, your credit is excellent," said John, bowing low, and glancing hastily round the shabby apartment: "but money was the last thing in my thoughts."

"Then what in the world brings you here, sir, at this time o' night?" said Polly, knitting her black eyebrows, until they formed a thick shade above her fierce blue eyes.

"A little private business of my own."

His eyes now for the first time encountered those of Miss Liddy, who was steadily surveying him from the depths of the old chair, and such an incarnation of ugliness sent a cold shiver through his blood.

First impressions are always the best—or the worst. On turning to Miss Polly, she appeared ten years better looking than her sister. "Good heavens! how ugly they are!" thought he: "but this is the woman for me, if flesh and blood can have contact with either of them. How can I pretend to love these hags! Honesty is the best policy; I'll tell the plain truth."

"Well, sir, what do you want with us?" said Miss Polly, still standing with the door in her hand.

Andrews threw himself into the first chair near him, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. "Now or never," thought he; "but if I look at her, my courage will fail me altogether. Did I ever feel

afraid or ashamed of speaking to a woman before? Shall I ever be able to look a pretty woman in the face again?" Banishing these reflections, he made a desperate effort at composure, and, turning to Miss Polly, said, with no slight perturbation in his voice and manner,—“Miss Polly Green, I want a wife; have you any objection to take me for a husband?”

At this unexpected announcement, both sisters were taken aback. Miss Liddy uttered a faint little scream, and buried her blushes in the well-worn pillow of the old chair; while Polly continued to stare at the daring man, with looks of astonishment, as if she doubted the evidence of her senses, or suspected him of being intoxicated, and playing off upon her a stale joke. It was not until after he had repeated his offer, with grave earnestness, that she seemed at all to apprehend the real purport of his visit.

It was the first time in her life that such a question had been put to her, and though she did not for one moment doubt the reason that had induced John Andrews to take such a step,—that it was not her, but her money that he wanted,—yet she was flattered that he had preferred her to her sister; and she did not exactly like to give up a chance of being married, which, in all probability, in spite of her wealth, might never be repeated. She hesitated—looked down—swayed the door to and fro from hand to hand, and for some minutes made no reply.

Miss Lydia thought, if the question had been put to her, she would not have made him wait so long for an answer. Miss Lydia was always matrimonially inclined.

“Well, sir,” said Miss Polly, at length raising her

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head, and looking her bold wooer resolutely in the face, "you are no hypocrite—you have told me no lie, nor pretended to admire a face, which Nature for some wise end best known to herself,—I am no philosopher in these matters,—made ugly. It is not me, but my money you want. Say so at once, and I will give you a candid answer."

"You are right, Miss Green," said John, thinking that his suit was at an end; "I have not a shilling in the world,—even that trifle you owe me being due to my creditors. Your wealth would, of course, make a man of me again; and, in return for it, I would treat you with kindness and gratitude. My character is well known in the town; people may consider me an imprudent, but no one would dare to call me a dishonest man. I have been a good husband to two women, whom I sincerely loved,—although the last, I must confess, was, in the first instance, sought more for money than love. If you will trust your happiness to my keeping, I will try and respect you, Miss Green—if I cannot exactly love you."

"*Love!*"—and Miss Polly indulged in a hoarse cackling laugh,—"*Who expects it of you? I'm sure not I. Love at the best is but a weakness, that the fondest grow ashamed of. But I like your frankness, and I feel very much inclined to accept your offer, as a matter of convenience.*"

John opened his eyes in his turn, and Miss Polly continued in an off-hand business-like manner,—

"You see, Mr. Andrews, if my sister and I die without children, our immense wealth will be inherited by strangers. My sister is advanced in years, and has no chance of having a family. Should I become the mother of either son or daughter, born in lawful wedlock, all this large fortune will, upon

Liddy's death, belong to me and mine. I care little about matrimony, would rather remain single than be bothered with a husband; but I do care about the money; do feel vexed and annoyed at the thought of its going entirely out of the family, and this is the sole inducement which makes me willing to accede to your proposal. Heaven may please to bestow upon me a child. I could not desire a more agreeable-looking man for its father. Your personal advantages may perhaps remedy my defects; and for these reasons—and these alone—I consent to become your wife."

John was thunderstruck—paralysed—yea, even disappointed at his unparalleled success. There was no remedy for it now—no backing out—she was to be his wife, and he must make the best of a bad bargain. Taking her very *gently* round the waist and shutting his eyes, he imprinted a kiss somewhere on her coarse cheek, instinctively avoiding the large thick lips and projecting teeth, and the odour of brandy with which they were impregnated. Then, sitting down beside his *Dulcinea*, discussed with her until the midnight hour rang from the tower of the old Gothic church, his present happiness and future prospects; and when he left the house, Miss Polly Green did not appear quite so ugly in his eyes as when he entered.

"So, you have made a pretty piece of work of it, sister," said Miss Lydia, spitefully, the moment they were once more alone, "by letting that drunken fellow into the house. I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself, for accepting his insulting offer. One would imagine that you had taken a drop too much yourself. Faugh! Your conduct I consider indelicate in the highest degree."

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"Mind your own business," returned Polly, sharply. "When you get such a chance, I shan't interfere with it."

"No likelihood of *that*, while you tell everybody how old I am. What right have you to mention my age? You do it on purpose to hinder me from getting married, that you may have all the property! But I will live to be a hundred years old, on purpose to disappoint you."

"You may extend your age to that of Methuselah, for what I care," said Polly, coldly. "Thank Heaven! I have enough—and you can't have any children."

"And you want to grab my portion for your children."

"No need of that: time will put them into possession, without any aid from wishes of mine."

"I hope you may never have any!" said Lydia.

"Thank you," said Polly, making a curtesy, with a mock air of humility. "I am very much obliged to you, sister Lydia. You would wish to spare me all the pains and cares of maternity; those pains and pleasures you can never know. But I may make an aunt of you yet, and then will call my first girl *Lydia*, in compliment to you."

Perhaps Miss Polly was counting her chickens before they were hatched. This the sequel will show.

Late as it was, when John Andrews drew near the dwelling of Ben Boyce, he found that exemplary early riser, his notable wife, still up, and impatiently awaiting his arrival.

Her ear, sharpened by intense curiosity, caught the sound of his step before it reached the door, which literally flew open to receive him.

"Come in!—come in!" cried she, "and tell us the news! Ben and I are dying with curiosity to know all about it."

"How did the old cats receive you, Jack? and what luck have you had in your wooing?" said Ben, stirring the fire into a blaze, and motioning with his pipe, for Andrews to take the arm-chair.

"Pray, my dear friend, use more respectful language, when speaking of the future Mrs. Andrews," said Jack, laughing, as he sank down into the comfortable seat; "I have only been too successful."

"No, sure, it can't be possible; they must know how ugly they are; they could never be such fools as to accept such an absurd offer?"

"Faith! the one I have chosen, or rather, who has chosen me, is not such a fool either; she is a deuced shrewd, clever woman; and if she were not so awfully plain, I could almost fall in love with her for her wit."

"You are humbugging us, Andrews," suggested Ben, who was sitting with his mouth wide open, and his hands on his knees, devouring every syllable the ex-publican uttered; "she can't have accepted you?"

"Seriously, my dear fellow, she has; and next Monday week I am to lead to the hymeneal altar the charming Polly Green."

"Well, that beats all. John Andrews, you are a fortunate man," cried Ben, and perhaps there was a slight touch of envy in the tone of his voice. "A very, very fortunate man. People may laugh at you for a few days, but wealth always commands respect, and it will soon reconcile both them and you to the absurdity of the thing. Let them laugh who win, say I."

"Let me mix you a tumbler of hot stuff, Mr.

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Andrews," said Mrs. Boyce, growing all of a sudden wonderfully hospitable, "and get you a bite of bread and cheese, for I suppose the stingy old maids never offered you any supper."

"My mind was too much occupied, to think of eating; but, to tell the truth, the temptation was not placed in my way. Now the excitement is a little over, I begin to feel rather peckish."

Mrs. Boyce bustled about to cover the table with all sorts of nice things—a ham, fresh butter and bread, and a delicate little cream cheese, made with her own fair hands. John, who had been on short commons all day, and who was a capital knife-and-fork's-man, fell to with a right good-will; and Mrs. Boyce saw with a shudder her good cheer rapidly vanish from the table. "He requires to marry a rich wife," she muttered to herself as she removed the empty dishes. "How the man eats! it would take a fortune to keep him." Three hours ago, Mrs. Boyce would have seen John Andrews at the bottom of the river, before she would have asked him to sup with her.

John imagined that he was the most welcome visitor in the world; his courtship had made him hungry, and he did eat—eat until he was fully satisfied; and then, with a jolly countenance beaming with pleasure, he told his tale, beginning at the beginning, with great humour, describing the scene with such comic effect that his auditors were convulsed with laughter.

"The only drawback to my happiness," said he in conclusion, "was being obliged to kiss the lady, and that she was too stingy to repay me for the sacrifice, by offering me a glass of her brandy and water."

"You will have need of it by-and-by," said Ben;

"on the wedding-day we will keep your spirits up, by pouring spirits down."

"You forget, I have no love to cure. Love, and Polly Green, is quite out of the question. I almost told her so to her face."

"Miss Polly is not the Pig-faced Lady, after all," said Mrs. Boyce; "and I knew a very handsome young fellow who married her for a very *small* consideration. A mere trifle to the fortune you will get with your wife."

"She must know, Andrews, that you only marry her for her money," suggested Ben.

"Of course she does."

"Then what on earth tempted the woman to accept you?"

"The hope of having children to heir the property; in which case, I most devoutly pray that they may not take after the mother's side of the house."

"Amen!" cried Ben and his wife in a breath.

"Amen!" quoth John; and thanking his friends for the interest they had taken in his affairs, Andrews took the path to his solitary home, humming to himself, in rather a dolorous voice, for such a jolly bridegroom, two lines of a song, which he had heard an itinerant Scotchman sing in the bar-room, one night over his cups, and with which he had been highly amused at the time—

"Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wad' na' gie a button for her!"

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CHAPTER VI.

"Pray, Madam, will you take this man,
Your wedded lord to be?—
Right gladly, Sir—I only fear,
He never will take me!"

THAT night John Andrews had a fearful vision; and as he had no one to whom he could tell it—for he was ashamed of telling it to Mr. and Mrs. Boyce, for fear of being laughed at—it lay very heavily upon his mind,—as heavily as the hot brandy-and-water, the ham, and the cream cheese and fresh bread and butter, of which he had partaken so plentifully at his neighbour's house, did upon his stomach; the fumes of which, no doubt, had been the first cause of this remarkable dream.

He thought that the marriage between himself and Miss Polly had taken place, and he and his bride were reposing in the most white bed, which had been decorated by his pretty Kate for their happy bridal.

The *third* Mrs. Andrews was asleep, and snoring heavily, and her horrible face looked more horrible still, reclining upon the snowy pillows; and John, unable to close his eyes, was contemplating the spectacle in silent astonishment, when he was roused from his meditations upon death's heads and cross-bones, by a soft, and well-remembered voice, murmuring in his ear—" *Is she anything like me, John?*" and bending over him, almost near enough to touch his lips, he beheld the fair young face of his first love.

John tried in vain to speak—to clasp her to his

heart; his tongue was paralysed, his limbs powerless. Again she whispered in a sad plaintive tone, that chilled his very soul—"Tell the old witch to be kind to my poor little boys."

John uttered a deep groan, and the phantom vanished, and he only beheld the red face of his bride, now rendered doubly frightful in his eyes, reclining on his pillow.

"Oh, my dear lost Kate!" cried he, "how could I put this ugly toad in your place?"

"*Have you forgotten me, John?*" said a gay, blythe voice near him; and standing at the foot of the bed, dressed in a gala costume, which set off to the best possible advantage her rosy cheeks and sparkling black eyes, he beheld the handsome widow

"Who gave that angel boy on whom he doats,
And died to give him,—orphan'd in his birth."

"Ah, Maria!" cried he, starting up in the bed, and holding out his arms to receive her; "are you, too, come to upbraid me with my folly?"

"John," said she, with a serious smile, "tell that woman by your side to take care of my motherless babe."

Before the tortured bridegroom could answer, his bride awoke, and with a loud yell, flung herself upon his breast, like a weight of lead.

Down—down—down they went to the dreary confines of eternal night, until the wretched man aroused himself from the terrible dream with a shriek of agony, and blessed himself and his Maker to find it but a dream.

"It is a warning from Heaven!" cried he. "May I perish, if ever I take that fiend to my bed and board, though she had money enough to pay off the national debt!"

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But the morning came, and the gay sunlight dispelled the gloomy visions of the night. John was ashamed of his weakness; he thought of all the fine things that could be purchased with Miss Polly's wealth, and he tried to consider himself what his neighbours believed him to be, a very fortunate man. But for ever in his ears he heard the soft voice murmuring—"Is she anything like me, John?" and he was literally haunted by the ghosts of his former wives. The consequence of this was, that he lost his appetite, and his sleep went from him.

"You look ill, Mr. Andrews," said the bride elect, with more softness in her look and manner than could have been expected from her. She was really half in love with her handsome suitor. "I must insist upon you taking some of these cough lozenges, and I will send you over a basin of hot brandy caudle to take after you are in bed to-night. Your sister had better first bathe your feet in hot water, to induce perspiration and draw down the cold. You have no idea how bad you look."

Poor John's malady was one of the heart, not of the head, and was not likely to yield to lozenges and hot caudle. He thanked the sympathising Polly with the best grace he could, and said, "It was nothing,—only a slight cold—that he should be perfectly well in a few days."

"I hope so," resumed his Dulcinea. "I never was ill in my life, and have very small experience in such matters, and I fear I should not make a good nurse."

John heard her not. At that moment the soft blue eyes of his first wife were looking into his very soul.

"I was thinking," continued Miss Polly, who did

not know how to account for his strange abstraction, "that it would be an useless expense for us to hire a separate house. My sister has consented for us to share this with her; and it would be as well," she continued, with a significant look, "to take her at her word."

"But the children, my dear madam—where shall we stow the children?" cried John, starting from his waking dream.

"Children!" screamed Miss Polly and Liddy in a breath.

"Ay, children!"

"You never told us you had any children."

"I thought everybody in —— knew that I had a family."

"We, at any rate, were ignorant of the fact," said Miss Liddy, drawing herself up; "and I think it was taking an unfair advantage of *me*, and my sister, to conceal it from us."

"But, my dear ladies, you knew that I had been twice married, that my wives were both young and handsome, and that children were the natural consequence of matrimony. Yes, thank Heaven! I am happy to say, I am the father of three fine boys."

"A small matter for gratulation, I should say," remarked Miss Polly, with a frown; "I hate children, boys in particular."

"But my boys are beautiful!"

"Worse and worse. Children are always a great pest, and handsome children are sure to be spoiled. Cannot your sister take care of them for a *slight* consideration?"

"Where I am, I am determined my children shall be also," said John, rising, and reaching down his hat from the peg, for the voice that had haunted him for

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the last few days was whispering in his ear—"John, tell the old witch to be kind to my poor little boys!" "If you consider the little fellows such a trouble now, what will it be when you are my wife? It is better to part at once, than quarrel about them for the rest of our lives."

His hand was upon the lock of the door, but Miss Polly, who had no intention of parting with her husband, called to him to stop, declaring that she would do the best she could by the children, which, doubtless, would be bad enough, if people might judge by her treatment of the poor donkey. John would gladly have drawn his neck out of the noose, but Miss Polly smoothed down her ruffled plumes, and made such fair promises of future kindness to be practised towards the young ones, that she left him not a hole to creep out of his bargain.

John went away with fearful misgivings. The wedding, however, was near at hand, and it was too late to repent when the cake was made, the licence bought, and the guests invited to the feast.

"Good heavens!" cried the unfortunate man, dashing the tears from his eyes, as for the last time he flung himself into his solitary bed, "that nightmare of a woman will be the death of me!"

Contrary to his expectations, he quickly fell asleep, and forgot all his sorrows until near day-break, when Fancy began to play him some of her old tricks. He was transported by her capricious ladyship into the parish church, before the altar of which he beholds his bride elect. She is deeply veiled, and magnificently arrayed in fawn-coloured silk—a suitable emblem of youth and innocence. Two females, clad in white, stand on either side, to assist the bride in removing her glove, in order to

receive the golden symbol of an irrevocable vow, supposed to be the pledge of eternal love. The priest, too, is there in his flowing garments, with the sacred book open in his hand. There is something sly and sinister in his physiognomy, a hypocritical leer that John thinks agrees very ill with his holy calling. The black locks that cluster round his broad, low forehead, rise mysteriously on either side, and vastly resemble in shape the short horns of a wild bull. Andrews glances intuitively towards his lower extremities, to see if his feet at all harmonise with his head; but the lawn gown, like charity, covers a multitude of defects, and forbids the cloven foot, if he possesses such a novel article, to peep out.

Behind the bride, a man with a tall meagre figure, and bloodless and cadaverous face, points towards him with a sardonic grin. The sight of this ghastly incarnation of ugliness, hurries him back to the sports and sorrows of boyhood; to the little school-house and the despotic rule of its stiff pedagogue, Dan Green; and his hands tingle, and his back smarts, as countless reminiscences of the rod and ferula float through his mind.

But, hush! the service commences. In his ears the sacred ceremony sounds like blasphemous ribaldry, to which his heart makes no response. The moment at length arrives when he is to place the ring on the finger of his bride, and utter the irrevocable—"I will."

One of the ladies in white hurries forward, and officiously raises the bride's veil, while the other draws the glove from her fleshless hand, and display to his astonished gaze a death's-head, bearing a startling resemblance to Miss Polly Green, while his Kate turning suddenly upon him the light of her

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heavenly blue eyes, and forcing her round rosy lips into a malicious smile, whispers in his ear, "*John, is she anything like me?*"

He writhes with agony, and tries to fly from the spot, and is caught in the arms of the other female, who says in a bantering voice, "Some marriages are made in *heaven*, John; but this was made in *t'other* place!"

At this announcement, loud peals of laughter shake the place; the priest vanishes in a flame of fire, and Andrews awakes in a cold sweat.

"Come, Andrews; get up, get up;" cried the merry voice of his friend, Ben Boyce; "what do you mean by lying snoring here on your wedding morning? Ar'n't you ashamed of yourself, man, to pay such a poor compliment to the bride?"

"She may go to — for what I care. I dreamt I saw the devil marry us, and old Dan Green give the bride away. Ha! ha! ha!"

"Why, John, are you mad?"

"Mad! Oh, no; I'm perfectly in my senses. My mind's made up, that's all; so here goes." And springing lightly from his bed, he commenced whistling a lively tune, and cutting sundry eccentric capers round the room.

Ben stared at him in astonishment, thinking to himself, that his extravagant mirth was rather mistimed, and too outrageous in its demonstrations to be genuine. But how did his wonder increase, when flinging down his shaving-brush in the midst of that important operation, which covered his new pants, in lieu of his chin, with lather, John snapped his fingers and again burst into a long continuous roar of laughter. "John, John! what is the meaning of this outrageous mirth?"

"You will know by-and-by," quoth John, laughing more loudly than heretofore. "Don't I look jolly?"

"Yes; quite different from the hang-dog face you have worn for the past week. My wife said that you looked like a lamb going to the slaughter."

"And to-day I feel like a lion with a rose-bud in his mane. Ha! ha! ha! 'tis a capital joke; one that will send that old gentleman back to his own place with a flea in his ear!"

"You speak in riddles."

"No wonder. I have been a riddle to myself for the last week. Had I met myself in the street, I'd have sworn, that fellow is not John Andrews. I have just recovered my identity, which must excuse me for playing the fool to commemorate such a joyful occasion."

John had now adjusted his toilet; and he looked a smart dashing fellow, fit to carry by storm the heart of widow or maid. "Am I not too handsome for that old she-fox?" cried he; glancing at his fine person complacently in the glass. "Answer me that, Ben."

"Tut, man! You have forgotten the 75,000*l.* and contingencies."

"That's the bright side of the picture; I was looking at the reverse," returned the bridegroom. "I wonder what my charming Poll is thinking of this morning, and how she looks."

*"She often drinks, and always swears,
Now is not that a pleasure?"*

"Don't go on in this mad way, Andrews," cried Ben, not a little provoked at his friend's levity, "one would think your were tipsy, yourself."

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"Mad with anticipation! Drunk with delight! Do, Ben, let a poor fellow enjoy his liberty while it lasts! The dull days are coming, when he cannot sing. The dark nights are coming, when he cannot sleep. Let me laugh while I can,

"And drive away care!"

Ben Boyce seriously thought that his poor friend had lost his senses; for Ben, who had married for money himself, saw nothing very dreadful in a man marrying an ugly woman, who had 75,000*l.* to compensate for her want of charms; and in rather an angry tone he notified to the ex-barber and publican, that if he did not conduct himself with more sobriety, he would decline the honour of giving away the bride. This threat produced the desired effect. John became suddenly grave, and taking his friend's arm, proceeded to the house of the bride.

Miss Polly received them with a singular contortion, which was meant for a smile, which almost became a spasm, when she glanced at the fine manly figure of her future husband.

She was dressed in the identical fawn-coloured silk and white veil she had worn in his dream; and John thought that the substance appeared far more frightful in its dark reality, than the shadow. He gazed upon her steadily; the first time he had ever ventured upon an act so rash, and a half-smothered laugh escaped from him.

"You seem in good spirits to-day, Mr. Andrews," said the bride.

"Excellent! How could it be otherwise, my angelic Mary?" and he turned his head away to conceal the roguish smile which gave the lie to his honied words.

Miss Lydia was her sister's brides-maid, and was dressed very gaily for the occasion. She tried to look smiling and agreeable; but as she was dying with spite and envy, the attempt proved, as such attempts generally do, a dead failure.

Mrs. Boyce made one of the party, and Ben was to act as daddy, and give away the bride. Poor timid thing! Mrs. Boyce made herself very busy in arranging the bridal party which, under her directions proceeded to church in the following order:

First came Ben Boyce with the bride on his *right* arm. Mrs. B. did not think it exactly the thing to place the chosen of another on the side nearest his heart. Then followed the bridegroom in a blue coat, white waistcoat, and black pants; his hair and whiskers arranged after the model of the last fashion-book, which Sewell, the tailor, had obligingly lent him for the occasion; Miss Lydia and Mrs. Boyce clinging devotedly to his sides, until the poor fellow was fairly pinioned between them. Two better looking men, and three uglier women, never proceeded on a similar occasion to the hymeneal altar. Nor were admirers wanting on their way thither. The whole town turned out its population in order to see them pass on their way to church.

"Here come the three graces!" shouted one graceless lad, the son of the clergyman of the parish, who should have known better.

"And that's Venus 'in the middle," cried a tall schoolboy.

"Venus! you fool, was a woman! Don't you see, that that's a man?"

"Why, he's the only good-looking one among them," said a third. "The bride should have given him her petticoats."

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"The man's a fool," muttered an old man to a bricklayer, who had stopped with a hod of mortar on his head, to say his say, and look at the spectacle.

"The devil a bit of him! Gold pills ar'n't bad to swallow. I wish he'd give me a few of them."

"And the bride?" suggested the old man.

"No, no; he may keep her all to himself."

"Then he'll want all the gold to sweeten that bitter pill," returned Greybeard, with a sententious shake of the head.

Now this was gall and wormwood to Andrews, who had always piqued himself upon his popularity, and he felt dreadfully ashamed of his degraded position; for when a person feels degraded in his own eyes, he invariably believes that the whole world is cognisant of the fact. He longed to knock all the impertinent folks on the head, and with great difficulty restrained his wrath within legal bounds til the party entered the church.

The ceremony proceeded very smoothly until the parson put to Andrews the thrilling question, "Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?"

There was a long pause.

Ben gave the bridegroom an admonitory jog.

Still no answer.

The bride turned her eyes imploringly upon her spouse, but she squinted so awfully, that he thought her tender glances were directed towards the Jack in armour, who for five hundred years had been cudgelling Time with his sword, in the chancel of the church.

Mrs. Boyce coughed, the parson frowned, Miss Lydia tittered audibly in her handkerchief.

The clergyman, thinking that the bridegroom

might happen to be deaf, turned the book to him, in order that he might read the answer for himself, but the incorrigible man shook his head, and turned away.

"Strange," thought the reverend gentleman, "that such a respectable well-dressed man should be deaf, and unable to read," and he repeated the ominous sentence in a louder key,

"Wilt thou have this woman to thy wedded wife?"

"No, sir, I *will not*," said Andrews, respectfully. "I thought I could, but it was a delusion of Satan's. I am sorry to disappoint a lady, but there's no forcing nature."

A shriek of rage from the bride, a hoarse laugh of gratified spite from the bridesmaid, and a hasty "By George!" from the astonished Ben Boyce, were unheard by the emancipated bridegroom, who, clearing the aisle at a bound, bolted through the little door near the altar, and reaching his humble lodgings, flung himself, in an ecstasy of joy, into his old arm chair, exclaiming, "I am free!—I am free! Thank God! I am my own master once more!" Then kissing the tears from his sister's pale cheeks, who stood wondering, and asking herself what this might mean, he bade her ask no questions till they were fairly out of town, for it was his intention to leave — that very morning, and he would tell all that had happened to him, and why he had returned unmarried, upon the road.

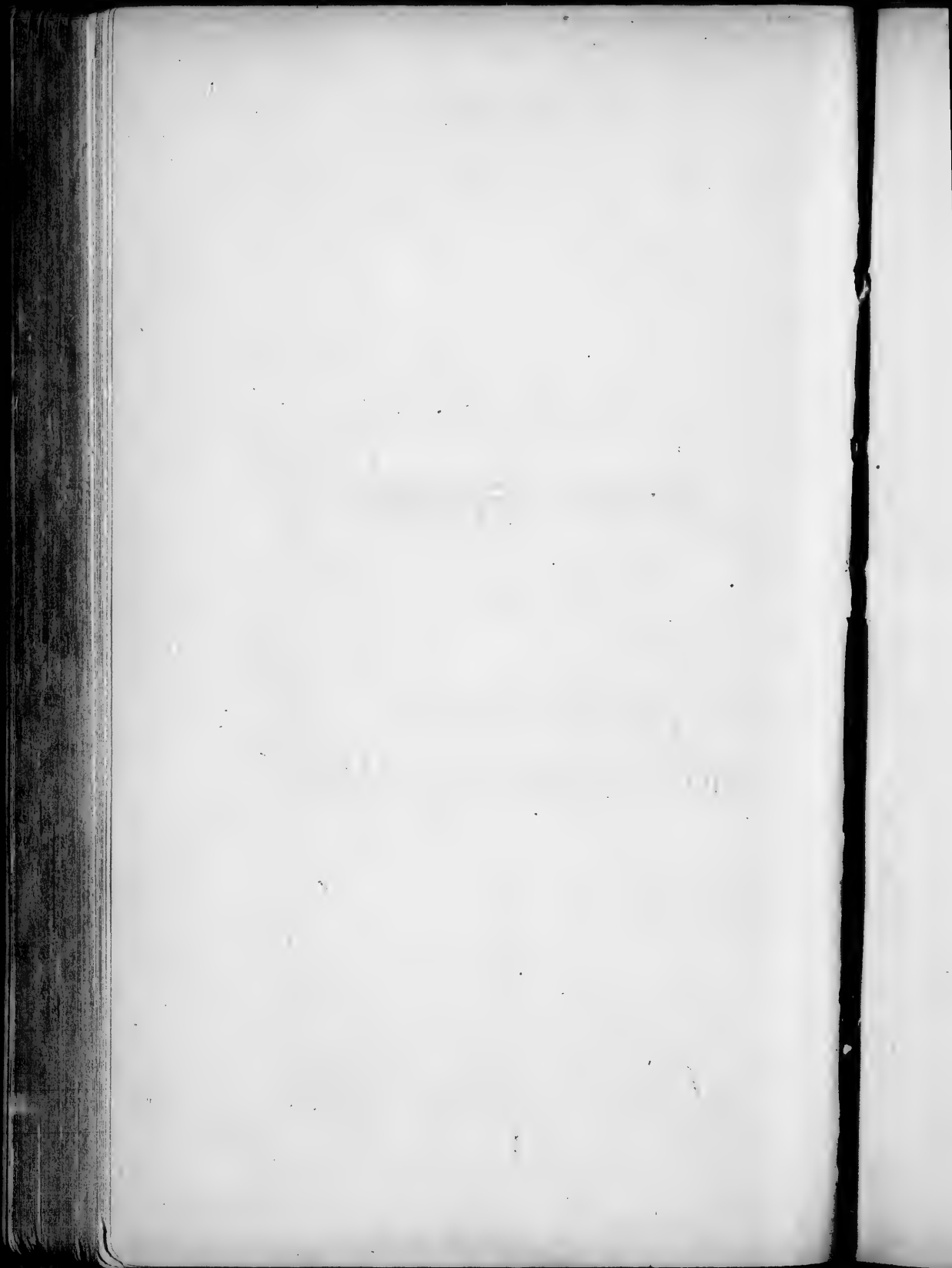
These explanations, we have no doubt, proved very satisfactory to poor Deb, who had never ceased crying and bewailing her lot, and the lot of the dear children, since she had been informed of her brother's projected union with Miss Polly Green.

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Years passed away before we heard any news of the gay widower; when happening to be staying on a visit in the city of N——, we stepped into a fashionable hairdresser's shop, to buy a pair of tortoiseshell combs, and the spruce owner of the establishment was no less a personage than our old friend John Andrews.

He had married a third wife, more congenial to his taste than Miss Polly, and by industry and prudence had acquired a snug little property. His boys had been placed on the foundation of the free-school, and were considered lads of great promise, and John rejoiced in a fresh brood of rosy-cheeked girls and boys, whom he introduced, with great pride of heart, to my notice, declaring, as he did so, that his last marriage had been the best *speculation* he ever made.

Happy for him that he found it so. We have no faith in speculations of any kind, still less in those which relate to the most sacred of all human ties, as it not only involves our own happiness, but its abuse tends to injure the mental and physical organization of the unfortunate beings who are the fruit of such unhallowed unions.



Matrimonial Speculations.

RICHARD REDPATH,
THE VOLUNTARY SLAVE.

PLANTER.

Black, good sir, is a damnable colour !
Symbolical of all men fear and hate.
Black as the grave—as hell—the arch-fiend himself
Bears on his cloudy front this sable gloom—
This race is mark'd by Nature with the brand
Of her deep curse, upon their swart brute brows,
Their woolly locks, and features blunt and coarse.
“ A man and brother ! ”—ere I'd own my kin
I'd hug the ape, and call the bear my brother !—
To say that God in his own image made
This mongrel crew, is false as blasphemous !

PHILANTHROPIST.

Thou dost confound the body with the soul—
The impalpable, mysterious, subtle essence
Which is of God,—and owns nor form nor colour,
With the poor senseless clay that perishes—
By the deep sufferings of this injured race,
Their long neglected and despised humanity,
(Like Christ's of old, rejected—trampled—scorn'd)—
They prove their title to the name of man.
Heirs of his sorrow—cross—and thorny crown !

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RICHARD REDPATH.

A FEW WORDS BY WAY OF PREFACE.

LEST any of my readers should imagine that I had availed myself of a subject made so justly popular by Mrs. Stowe's inimitable work, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," it is necessary to state, that the story of Richard Redpath was written in 1843, and appeared that year, in the Montreal Garland.

The principal incidents in the tale were related to me by a West Indian merchant, whom I met on board a steam-boat, going down from England to Scotland, who stated that the parties were known to him in his boyhood. As this happened in 1832, and the narrator was a middle-aged man, the events here recorded must have taken place during the latter part of the last century, or the beginning of this.

Whether true or false, I was greatly amused by the story and my companion's humorous and graphic manner of telling it. It may probably serve to while away the tedium of a "*juicy day*" in that fair and beloved isle, from which I had the honour to derive my birth, and it is therefore here presented to the British public.

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CHAPTER I

STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES BRING STRANGE CHARACTERS TOGETHER.

THE supper-bell had been rung for the last time before the Ship Tavern, a large marine hotel which occupied a conspicuous place at the head of a short street leading from the quay, in the beautiful capital of Jamaica, which was the general resort of seamen, whose vessels lay at anchor in the bay.

The little negro, who acted the part of bell-man, had given the noisy announcer of good things in store the last knowing shake, and turned upon his heel in the act of re-entering the house, when two tired and travel-soiled strangers approached the broad steps of the verandah which surrounded the building. Mungo regarded the twain for some seconds, with very unequivocal glances of contempt; then muttered, as he disappeared in the dark passage,—

“Dem be queer customers, anyhow: me nebber see de like ob dem.”

Mungo's exclamation of surprise was scarcely to be wondered at, so begrimed were the men with dirt, so torn their wet garments, so dejected their looks. They had lost their hats, coats, and shoes, appeared like men who had been engaged in some drunken fray, or met with a sudden and unexpected misfortune.

In the verandah they were confronted by the

landlord, a tall, stout mulatto, in a suit of nankeen, who, in no very civil terms, demanded their names and business?

"Our names," said the foremost speaker, "are of very little consequence now, to you, or to any one else. The names of men without money are the most unimportant things in the world. Yet, to satisfy your curiosity, and show you that we are not ashamed of our names, I will answer your question frankly. Our names are Redpath—we are brothers, and strangers in Jamaica. Our business is to eat, for we are hungry—to drink, for we are thirsty—to sleep, if we can procure a bed, for we are greatly fatigued, and stand much in need of rest."

"Hab you money to pay de reckoning?" asked the landlord, putting his arms akimbo, and filling up the doorway with his huge person.

"Deuce a farthing!" returned the former speaker, "We must trust to your charity."

"Den be off at once! De whites show no charity to us, and I'll show none to dem. Da—— Buckra! Be off! I say, I hab no beds! no food, no grog for rascals widout coats, and hats, and money. Dere is a low public down by de wharf, dat takes in de *vulgars*!"

This eloquent speech drew from the person to whom it was addressed, and who, under other circumstances, would have been reckoned a very handsome fellow, a merry burst of laughter, and turning to his companion, he said, with a look of inimitable humour, "He is right, Bob. We had better try our luck in the quarter he recommends: until we can procure coats and hats, we must be content to rank with the *vulgars*."

Robert Redpath, whose countenance wore a melancholy and dejected expression, and whose tall, slight frame appeared sinking from exhaustion and fatigue, sat down upon the broad step of the verandah, and answered moodily—

“You may do as you please, Richard, but *I* can go no further to-night.”

“Hark you, friend!” said his brother, turning and addressing the mulatto in a less audacious strain, “we are two unfortunate fellows, who have just escaped shipwreck. Our vessel was lost off the point in the squall last night; and to the best of our knowledge, all the rest of those on board perished. We were passengers, the sons of a respectable London merchant, who were coming out to open a store in your town, our goods forming a large portion of the freight of the ship. The storm robbed us of our all, and with great difficulty we escaped with life by clinging to a portion of the wreck. You see my brother; the condition in which he is, demands attention. I am sure you are too humane a man, to turn from your door two poor fellows who have fought with the winds and waves all night, without offering them food and shelter. I am strong; what you give, I can repay in work. But if you are a Christian man, for the love of God, give my poor brother something to eat.”

Though a coarse vulgar specimen of humanity, the mulatto was not destitute of the common charities of his kind. After regarding the young men attentively for some minutes, and satisfied by their language and manner, that their story was not altogether an imposition, he told them, in his blunt way, that he was sorry for their misfortune, and the

more so as his own father had been lost at sea. That had they told him so at first, he would not have kept them starving without, when there was plenty of food within, and bidding them follow him, he led the way into a spacious dining-room, where a large number of guests were already assembled.

A motley group composed of persons of all nations and complexions, were ranged around the table discussing their evening meal. Hardy weather-beaten seamen from every European port, mingled with American traders from the north and south, Jew merchants and the venders of marine stores. Traders in human flesh from the shores of Africa were eagerly discussing the value of some new importation, and the sums they would probably realize in the slave-market. A hubbub of voices prevailed. Men were talking loudly in strange tongues; and from amidst the general noise and confusion issued from time to time the loud laugh, the obscene jest, the profane oath, mingled with the din and clatter of knives and forks, removed plates, and the ringing of glasses and bottles coming in contact with each other.

The brothers took their seats at the bottom of the long table in silence. They were destitute strangers, keenly alive to the humiliating circumstances in which they were placed. They neither spoke nor looked around them; but commenced a vigorous attack on the contents of the dish before them, as if they intended to make ample amends for their long fast.

"That's right, my hearties! Eat away!" cried out an old weather-beaten British tar, who had finished his supper, and was calmly smoking his pipe. "I would rather have the keeping of you for a day nor a month. By Jove! you load up so fast, the vessel

will be ready for sea in no time. Why, old Tar-barrel! you should charge them 'ere youngsters double fare; they eat as fast as Winkin."

"Men who eat in dat way, hab rarely any ting to pay," said the Mulatto, drily.

This speech was not exactly meant to insult the strangers; but proceeded more from the coarse nature of the man, than from any intention to wound their feelings; for in reality he was not displeased to see them enjoy a good meal. But whether meant, or not meant, it had the effect of satisfying the appetite of the elder of the twain. He suddenly dropped his knife and fork,—pushed his plate from him,—rose from the table, and seated himself on a bench in an obscure corner of the room. Resting his elbows upon his knees, his head sunk mechanically between his hands, and he took no part in the busy scene around him.

The old sailor followed him with his eyes, and continued puffing away vigorously from a Chinese pipe, of which he seemed not a little vain, taking it from time to time from his lips, and holding it up before him, as if lost in admiration of the curious little bald-headed pink mandarin, which formed its silver-mounted bowl.

Richard Redpath cast an inquiring glance at his brother, as much as to say, "How foolish you are to quarrel with your bread and butter, and resent an unmeant insult from the mouth of an ignorant man! It will be many hours before we can procure another good meal;" and he commenced a fresh attack upon the fine ham before him.

"That was a dreadful squall last night," said one of the men at table; "it blew dead on shore."

"It did some damage, too," said another. "One fine vessel went down off the point. I happened to be spending the evening with Dan Jones, and we saw her sink. The hurricane was so violent, and came on so suddenly, that we were forced to lie down on our faces to keep our feet."

"That was reversing the order of things," said a third, laughing. "I wonder that the hair was not blown from your heads. Were any of the crew of the vessel saved?"

"I heard of none."

"It's of no great consequence," returned the former speaker. "The captain was only a nigger, in the employ of old Baynes. His freight, slaves from the coast of Guinea. Set a thief to catch a thief. Old Baynes knows what he's about well enough. He always employs blacks to barter for blacks."

"It must have been a great shock to the old man; and will doubtless bring on a fresh attack of gout. Black cattle are rather scarce in the market, and there has been a great mortality on his estate. He will never survive the loss of the *Queen of Sheba*."

"I wish he was in heaven with her sable majesty," exclaimed a reckless, dare-devil, half-caste man, dressed elaborately fine, "and I was heir to his estate."

"And his pretty daughter, eh! Mister Antonio?" said the landlord; "Lubly Miss Betsy is not for the like ob you."

"He has too much black blood in him, Martin Bass," said one of the former speakers, with a sly look to his companions, "for old Baynes to give him his daughter."

"Perhaps I can take her without his leave," said the dandy of colour.

"Perhaps not. Two must agree upon that subject, before you conclude that bargain."

"The old maid, her aunt, is on my side."

"But the young maid, her niece, what does she say to it?"

"Time will show," returned Mr. Antonio, with an air of mystery.

"It will. Pray don't forget to invite us all to the wedding."

Richard Redpath had just concluded his supper. The parties were all strangers to him; yet, in spite of himself, he lent an attentive ear to their conversation. What was old Baynes to him? and the lovely Miss Betsy he might never be destined to see. Still he felt a growing curiosity to know something more about them, and regarded the gaily-dressed, piratical-looking quadron with a jealous scrutiny, which amused himself by its unreasonable absurdity. His eyes at length wandered from the group of talkers to his brother, who still maintained his crouching and dejected attitude; apparently indifferent to everything, but his own mental sufferings.

"Do you know anything of the vessel, messmate, that was lost last night?" said the old sailor, striking him familiarly over the knee. "Why, man! you are as wet as a water-dog."

"No wonder," said Richard, turning to the old man, "I was in the water part of last night, expecting every moment to become food for the sharks. My brother and I were the only living creatures that survived the wreck of the 'Maria.'"

The old man smiled quietly to himself. "A British vessel?"

"Yes; from the port of London—Captain Howard—A fine three-masted bark, bound to Jamaica."

"Some hope for you yet, Mr. Antonio," said the landlord, winking at the quadroon; "Miss Betsy's husband dat is to be was on board dat vessel."

"That was to be—you mean—" Then turning to Richard, he said, in an anxious, excited tone, "Young man, can you tell me if a person called Henry Ingate was among your passengers?"

"There was a gentleman of that name."

"Is he drowned?"

"To the best of my knowledge. I would to God it were not so. He was a fine true-hearted young fellow, whom I would cheerfully have parted with my all to save."

"What's loss to one man is gain to another. Hurra! my fortune is made!" cried Antonio, flinging his broad straw hat into the air, and cutting sundry capers through the room. "Good-bye, Bass; I must be the bearer of these good tidings to old Baynes. If it does not kill him outright, I shall be able to see which way the wind blows." And out he rushed, overturning several cane chairs in his retreat.

"Now that is what I call a born fool," said the old sailor. "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good, I've heard say; but 'twill be no good to the poor girl that's spliced to the like o' him." Then, turning to Redpath, he continued his interrogatories.

"So you and your brother belonged to that unfortunate crew?"

"Not to the crew, but were passengers."

"From London?"

Richard nodded assent.

"Cockneys, hey?"

"The same, at your service; born within the sound of Bow-bells."

"Did you lose much?"

"Our all."

"Poor lads! poor lads! But you must not be cast down. Trust in Providence. She never deserts those who are true to themselves. Are you wholly without means?"

"Without clothes or money, and strangers in a strange land."

"Worse and worse. It's little I can do to help you. My heart is large, young countryman, but my means are small; a sailor has seldom much shot in the locker, especially if he has neither wife nor child to hoard for, and mine are gone long years ago. This will, however, pay for your night's lodging, and procure for you a few meals." And the old man slipped a guinea into Richard's hand.

"A thousand thanks and blessings! my dear, good, old friend," cried Redpath, crimsoning with emotion; "but I cannot—no, indeed, I cannot accept your bounty."

"Now don't go to vex an old fellow who has no sons of his own, by refusing a trifle like that," said the sailor, closing Redpath's fingers forcibly over the glittering piece; "if you never pay me, I shall receive both principal and interest at the great reckoning by-and-by. Perhaps we may never meet again till then. If not, God bless and help you both! My name is Benjamin Waters."

The old man rose and left the house, before Richard

could find words to express his thanks, but his eyes glittered with unusual brilliancy, as he dropped the precious coin into his empty pocket.

The room was now clear of guests, and the little negro came in with a candle, and offered to light the brothers to a dry loft, where they would find plenty of straw, on which, "Massa Bass said, they were welcome to pass the night."

"I must have a better bed than straw, Mungo."

"Yes, if massa can pay for it," returned Mungo, with a grin.

"We will talk of that to-morrow, white face. Show us to a decent chamber."

Mungo hesitated. Richard held up the gold piece between his thumb and finger.

"Massa is right. Dat be de key dat unlocks ebbery door. Dis way, an' you please."

CHAPTER II.

A LECTURE ON DISCONTENT.

THAT night the weary voyagers slept soundly, without rocking. They still, in fancy, heard the roaring of the mighty waters sounding in their ears; and the confusion and din served to lull them into sounder repose.

They rose with early day, and descended into the room of public resort. An old negress was the only creature stirring in the house; and, ashamed of being seen abroad in their present destitute condition, the brothers sat down in silence, each apparently engaged in ruminating upon their forlorn condition. The elder, Robert, was the first to speak.

"A penny for your thoughts, Richard."

"Just four farthings more than you can afford to pay for them," returned Richard, with a good-natured smile; which, in spite of their gloomy prospects, called into action the roguish dimples that surrounded his handsome mouth. After striving for a few minutes to overcome his risibility, he gave it up as a bad job, and burst into a hearty laugh.

"Hang it! man, don't look so dismal; you make bad worse, by letting your spirits sink with your fortunes. The storm made us free of the world; but ought we not to be very thankful that we are not this morning food for the sharks?"

"Your mirth is misplaced, Richard; I am ill and depressed, and can scarcely feel grateful to God for

the mere boon of life, when He has taken from us all that made life desirable."

"Shame! shame, brother Robert! this from you! Has your ducking in the salt brine changed your nature, deprived you of all manly fortitude, and given you a woman's heart? I always felt proud of our relationship till now. If you go on with this puling and whining, I shall be tempted to cut the connexion. But, no! to desert you in difficulties would be acting too much in accordance with the worldly maxims I despise. My dear brother, I pity your irritable temper, and love you all the better for your misfortunes."

"You speak of our mutual calamity, Richard, as if I were the only sufferer."

"I speak the truth; *you* suffer, *I* am resigned to the will of God, and am as cheerful as our present circumstances will allow me to be; thankful that my life has been spared, and that I still possess those inestimable treasures, youth and health. And while I continue to enjoy these, I will never complain. The loss of wealth cannot make me miserable; the loss of a brother might. I verily believe, Robert, that you would rather have been drowned, than lost your property."

Robert Redpath remained silent and gloomy. He was not one to imagine that he could possibly err, still less was he likely to acknowledge it.

"How ungraciously you listen to my sage reproof," continued Richard. "If I were to preach patience to you for an hour, your stubborn mood would not let you remember one word of the text. So difficult is it for a proud man to overcome the evil spirit within him."

"It is one thing to preach, another to practise," said Robert, coldly; "can your boasted philosophy fill that empty purse?"

"Regretful murmurings will never do it at any rate. Fortune, like an ill-natured step-dame, has determined that I shall dine with Duke Humphry to-day, and I, like a wise son, have been racking my brains for the last hour, to outwit her capricious ladyship. If I cannot make the land restore what the sea so unceremoniously took away, my name is not Richard Redpath."

"Have you formed any plan for the future? You used to be excellent at expedients when we were boys at school."

A nod and a bright smile was the reply.

"Anything feasible?"

"I hope so; but time can alone determine that. Before I answer the host of questions, which I perceive by ascertain twinkle in your eye, you are preparing to put to me, will you allow me to ask a few in my turn?"

"As many as you please, provided they are to the purpose."

"Why did you and I leave England?"

"We were precious fools to embark in such a wild-goose chase," groaned Robert.

"We thought ourselves wise men—and, as yet, I see no reason to alter our opinion. Had things turned out as we expected, we should have thought ourselves so still. This is human nature, we are not gifted with second sight, or more sagacious than our neighbours."

"I was never very eager about it, Richard. It was your plan; you were so sanguine of success, that

you misled me. I detest speculation; I warned you against the danger of risking our little all in the hope of obtaining more."

"My dear Robert, recrimination is useless, even if I were wholly to blame in the matter, a fact which I positively deny. You always appeared as eager for the scheme as I could be. But let that pass. Had our adventure prospered, we should have applauded our own sagacity, and the world, always on the side of the fortunate, would have echoed the good opinion we had formed of ourselves. From the world we cannot reasonably expect any sympathy, for we have lost our all, and as she will not help us out of the difficulties that surround us, we must dare to help ourselves."

"This unexpected calamity has paralysed me. I cannot work in this hot climate; I would rather die than toil like a slave!"

"Then you must starve."

"A pleasant prospect that."

"Very—and the longer we contemplate it the worse it will get. But softly, my dear querulous, impatient brother, if you will enter into a scheme that has just popped into my fertile brain, you will have no occasion either to starve or commit *felo-de-se*."

"What is it—why do you keep me in suspense?" said Robert, pettishly.

"I cannot disclose it yet until I have matured my plan. I like to eat fruit well ripened in the sun. The crude and sour always sets my teeth on edge. If you can wait patiently for half-an-hour, I will not fail to satisfy your curiosity. Till then, adieu. I have business in hand, and reluctantly leave you to your own gloomy reflections."

"Incorrigible trifle!" muttered Robert; "when you learn wisdom I shall grow rich."

He started up from the bench he occupied, and strode gloomily through the room, bitterly cursing the evil destiny which had thus unexpectedly thrown him upon his own resources; again and again recurring to the dismal scene of the wreck, and the disasters which had befallen them.

The history of these brothers may be condensed into a few paragraphs. They were the only children of a respectable merchant in London, who for many years had enjoyed affluent means, and with it, all the luxuries and comforts that wealth can procure. But reverses came; misfortune upon misfortune; great houses failed; banks stopped payment in which large sums were vested; and our merchant died without having realized the fortune for his sons, which he had toiled all his life to obtain. Fortunately for his boys he had given them an excellent mercantile education, so that the means of obtaining a livelihood was always in their power. His ardent desire to leave them independent gentlemen had been frustrated, but on winding up his affairs, the sum of fifteen hundred pounds remained out of the wreck of his property, to be equally divided between them.

On his death-bed, the good father earnestly advised his sons to emigrate to one of the British colonies, and invest this small capital in some lucrative business that, industriously pursued, might enable them to secure the competency that he had failed to win.

The lads, left alone in the world, pondered long over their father's injunction. Many were the

plans they formed and abandoned, to come back to the old man's proposal at last. Robert, who was grave, almost sombre, in his disposition, a lover of books and refined pursuits, and who shrunk from any collision with the rude and vulgar, had a natural distaste for the toils and bustle of a retail shop. A wholesale merchant was, or might be, a gentleman—a shopkeeper was but a tradesman. He loathed the idea, and wished to try the law; but his means were too limited, and with a bitter sigh he resigned himself to his fate, and lent a willing ear to the sanguine schemes of his gay, joyous, and hopeful brother. Richard was not destitute of a certain degree of sentiment. He loved life for its own sake, and could enjoy the blessings it offered him in any situation. To him the sun would not shine less brightly, the birds sing less gaily, or the face of nature appear less divine, because he might be called upon to toil the greater part of the day behind the counter. Nay, when these labours of necessity were over, and the sense of duty satisfied, he enjoyed the bounteous gifts of Providence with tenfold zest, and revelled in the consciousness of existence. That great generous heart of his was never better pleased than when toiling for himself or others—and when he proposed opening a store in Jamaica, he did so in the idea, that the warm climate would benefit the delicate constitution of his brother, who might enjoy his love of ease without reproach, while he attended to the more active part of the establishment. Richard was always the last in his own thoughts, and though his love of the ridiculous often overruled the maxims of prudence, and he trusted too much to his wit to get him out of difficulties, he was always ready to

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sacrifice himself for those he loved, and his love for the proud, fastidious Robert, was so great, that he was ready to accept any situation, however painful and uncongenial to his happy disposition, that would in the least relieve his brother from anxiety and trouble.

From the hour they left England up to the present moment, all seemed to have gone wrong with them, and their prospects were now widely different from the highly-raised expectations with which they had left their native shores for the beautiful islands of the West. There they had fondly hoped to realize a large fortune out of their scanty means, and after a few years, to return to England as independent gentlemen.

The brothers had yet to learn that the men who have acquired the largest portions of this world's wealth, have ever been forced to fight with difficulties,—to win it by their ingenuity, or by the sweat of their brows, and not uncommonly have taken the road that led to fortune, with only a few pence in their pockets.

Our young adventurers were wrecked in sight of port—their bales of merchandise, on which their hopes depended, carpeted the caves of the ocean, and they themselves narrowly escaped with life. Their letters of credit, of introduction to respectable families, and what money they possessed upon their persons, had all been swallowed by the remorseless waves; and until they could prove their identity by letters from England, they might be regarded as homeless and nameless strangers.

We have introduced them as such to our readers, thankful to obtain a meal on charity, and exposed to

the coarse jests of a vulgar tavern-keeper, who proved by his disregard of their feelings, while supplying their animal wants, that he was a great respecter of persons, but only of such persons as carried heavy purses, and were the enviable possessors of complete suits of broadcloth.

Clever, shrewd, and laughter-loving Richard was rather amused by finding himself placed in such an unusual position, and bore his misfortunes with a noble fortitude, which, had it worn a graver aspect, might justly have been termed heroism. But few can sympathise in the misfortunes of a man who can laugh at them himself; and it was in vain that he endeavoured to divert his brother's mind from pondering over their late mischance, by strokes of drolery. Robert was in no mood to laugh, and he regarded Richard's mirth as mistimed and unfeeling.

"He has no thought—he never thinks. Is this a time to crack jokes, when we are naked and destitute in a foreign land? Hunger will soon compel him to laugh on the wrong side of his mouth, and force him to serious reflection. But what has become of him? I will step into the verandah and see."

CHAPTER III.

THE METAMORPHOSIS.

ROBERT REDPATH stepped upon the verandah just as two gaudily-dressed fat mulatto women were toiling up the steps, supported by the landlord.

Martin Bass looked big with importance, his tawny visage glowing with self-conceit and gratified pride, as he glanced down upon his thick-lipped companions with half shut eyes, and his huge mouth expanded into a most benignant smile.

"What a conceited ass!" muttered Robert, in his misanthropic mood, as he leant against the door-post, and, forgetful of his destitute appearance, contemplated the advancing group with feelings of unequivocal disgust.

"Out ob de way, you rag-a-muffin, stopping up de passage wid your ugly carcass. Let de ladies ob colour pass. You no hear, buckra-tief? Get out ob de way!"

Not aware that this elegant speech was addressed to him, Robert remained in the same attitude, until the application of a small cane, that the pompous landlord held in his hand, across his shoulders, roused him to a consciousness of the reality.

"Stand back, I say; I no hab my passage obstructed into my own house by one dam, hungry, empty, no pay fellow like you."

The hot blood burnt upon the young Englishman's

cheek. Seizing the coloured porpoise by the collar, he snatched the offensive weapon from his grasp, and tripping up his unwieldy legs, laid him sprawling at his feet. His arm was lifted in the act to strike, when it was forcibly held back by a negro slave.

"No, massa, no! fair play's a jewel—mulatto angry—massa angry. He down—massa up; massa no strike mulatto down."

"And who the devil are you?" cried the enraged Robert, regarding the officious peace-maker with the glare of a tiger. "Unhand me, rascal! or, by Jove! I'll make mince-meat of you both!"

"Massa nebber hab patience to chop such tough meat into sassengers," simpered the black; "Massa not know me—not know Sambo, who serbed him much faithful, so many years? Well, dat is de good joke: not know Sambo? he! he! he!"

"Served me! You lying, black scoundrel! I never saw your ugly face before."

"Nebber see Sambo? oh, ho!—oh, ho! Sambo born in de same house, lib all his life wid Massa Redpath."

At the sound of his own name Robert dropped the cane which he had still continued to hold over the negro in a menacing attitude, and stared at him in blank astonishment, as if he doubted the evidence of his senses.

"Sambo, you mistake me for some one else."

"De debil a bit; I no mistake. You, Massa Robert; ole Massa Richard Redpath's eldest son."

"True, that is my name; my father's name. But, Sambo, I was born and brought up in London, where no slaves are suffered to be kept, and never saw

Jamaica before in my life. How then can you possibly know me?"

"As well as Massa Robert know himself—berhaps a great sight better," he said, with a sly grin. That look, that waggish nod of the head, betrayed the cheat. Both were inimitable, and could only belong to one person. Robert turned contemptuously away.

"Richard, what disgusting folly. Is this a time for masquerading? What do you mean by trying to pass a base imposition off upon me? What purpose can be answered by thus burlesqueing our misery?"

"A greater than you imagine," said Richard, not the least disconcerted by this violent outbreak. Resuming his natural tone, he continued,—“If I could deceive you, Bob, I have only another being, who shall be nameless, to cheat. Leave off biting the end of that quarrelsome cane; it has done mischief enough already; and instead of breaking the head of our pompous landlord, to whom we owe a *small* debt of gratitude, which is still *unpaid*, descend from your stilts, and condescend to tell me how I acted the slave?"

"Nonsense! will playing the fool put money into our pockets? The debt I owe to this insolent Mulatto is burning into my heart."

"I hope so! 'tis the only way, now-a-days, for wise men to make money. Hear me, Bob; you want cash—I want a master: take me into the slave-market, and without further palaver, just sell me to the highest bidder."

Robert started back with an expression of horror depicted on his handsome melancholy face.

"Good God! what an idea! Can you for one

moment imagine me capable of committing such a crime?"

"Pshaw! mere words; starvation owns no law. The crime, if there be any in the case, rests with me, is of my own proposing. Nay, I am not joking, I never was more serious in my life. For one day I will condescend to act the slave, if you will deign to magnify yourself into the master."

"But supposing that I was mean enough, Richard, to consent to your proposal. I could not reconcile such a transaction with my ideas of honesty."

"Hang your nice scruples! Bob. If you succeed in disposing of me, it is but cheating some accursed planter, who has long fattened upon the heart's-blood of the poor oppressed negro—I have no such qualms of conscience. Should our scheme take, I will satisfy your honest scruples, by promising to repay my purchaser if ever I am fortunate enough to grow rich."

Robert mused for a moment: the scheme had at least novelty to recommend it; but he had some fears for his brother's safety.

"Richard, yours is an odd plan, as wild and eccentric as yourself. What if I were to take you at your word?"

"And prove yourself, for the first time, a sensible fellow."

"But if you should be retained in slavery?"

"It would only be for so long as it suited my convenience. If I fell into good hands, I would serve them conscientiously until I considered that I had justly earned my emancipation. On the other hand, if I find my situation very unpleasant, I have only to wash out the lie, and begin the world afresh.

Why, man, in this barter we have everything to gain and nothing to lose."

"Well, well, I believe you have wit enough to extricate yourself from a worse situation. But who will credit my story, or believe that a penniless stranger could be the owner of a slave?"

"When a black man is to be sold—especially such a fine well-limbed fellow as me," said Richard, laughing, "few questions will be asked as to the lawful claim you have to him. Say that you were the owner of the tight vessel, whose staunch timbers are now the sport of every billow. That all your property was lost in the wreck, save this slave, to whose exertions you were indebted for your life. Do not forget this circumstance; such an act of ingratitude on your part will give probability to your tale. To represent a slave-owner, you cannot be too indifferent to the claims of humanity. And, hark ye, Bob, don't fail to give me a famous character for temperance, honesty, and every other commendable quality."

"As I am to be the sole gainer by this strange barter, you may be sure that I shall not fail to set you off to the best advantage. But, my dear, generous, madcap brother, what use can I make of money so whimsically obtained?"

"Buy a new suit of clothes and advertise for a wife. But tell me, Bob, what you really think of my metamorphosis."

"'Tis admirable! Not black enough for a full blooded African; but well enough to pass for a maroon. How did you contrive to give your skin such a natural shade of brown?"

"That's my secret," said Richard. "I left you to grumble over our past mishap, and tried to make

myself agreeable in the eyes of black Daphne, our beauteous chambermaid; who, in return for all the civil things I said to her, kindly assisted in turning me into a nigger, and lent me this old pair of pants, which were once the property of a former husband. In this attire I sallied forth into the street, blushing through my oily mask at every damsel of colour that chance threw in my way."

"You blush! You were past that grace long before you turned black."

"I have put my face in mourning for my poverty, not my sins; and the sooner, Bob, you get a purchaser for my new visage, the sooner shall I be able to regain my old one."

Seeing that his brother was bent upon this strange adventure, and trusting to his ingenuity to get him out of any scrape into which his exuberant spirits and love of the ridiculous might lead him, Robert at length, but with great reluctance, consented to his plan, and inquiring the way to the slave market of little Mungo, he sauntered thither, followed at a respectful distance by the obedient Sambo.

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CHAPTER IV.

RICHARD SOLD.

It is full fifty years ago since the events here narrated took place, and the horrid traffic in human flesh was still carried on with the greatest vigour in the West Indian Islands. That disgusting scene of human depravity, the slave market, was enough to tame the sparkling vivacity of the younger Redpath. Careless as he often appeared of time and circumstances, Richard, with all his levity, had a large heart, full of generous sympathies for his fellow men. The joyous hilarity of his nature sprang more from the peace and good will that he felt towards all, than from any want of feeling or indifference towards their sufferings. He was humane, charitable, and forgiving, in the fullest sense of those words, with a frank, popular manner, that won for him the good will of all.

There are some persons who possess that strange magnetic influence over others in a remarkable degree—not merely attracting those whose disposition and pursuits are similar, but swaying minds in every respect the reverse of their own. This mysterious mental quality was his, though, as far as the owner was concerned, he was not aware of the circumstance. Hitherto he had always been led to consider that kindness begets kindness; that no man is wicked without a cause; in short, that human beings were far better than the world and books represented them; that sin was the child of circumstances, not the prolific parent of crimes.

He had never studied human nature under one of its worst and most degraded forms. Here he beheld the pernicious effects produced by a bad and immoral system—a system contrary to all laws, human and divine—upon the minds of a people daily familiarized to acts of cruelty, injustice, and oppression; the disgusting exhibition of brute force triumphing over helpless ignorance, of Avarice filling her coffers at the expense of human suffering, utterly regardless of the tears and agonies of its victims.

Abhorred slavery! Well is it for Britain that she has wiped off this foul stain from her national glory. And blessed, doubly blessed, to all time and through eternity, be the names of the great and good men, who stood unflinchingly forth to advocate the cause of an oppressed and unhappy race. Most noble of all modern reforms, was that bloodless triumph of reason and Christianity over the selfish, grasping avarice of the tyrant man!

The brothers arrived at the spot at a moment when a mother and her five children were put up to sale. Amongst the group of merchants and planters there assembled, the greater part of whom were fathers, no eye pitied the unhappy parent, no heart sympathised in her bitter anguish. Her children all fell to different masters; some proprietors in distant isles, and little chance existed that in this world the bereaved family could ever meet again.

The woman seemed fully aware of all this; and the final separation was more than she had fortitude to bear. Her cries and groans were heart-rending, as in turn she pressed to her outraged bosom the beloved inheritors of a life-long misery.

Raising her clenched hand to heaven, she exclaimed in her strong agony,—“Is there no God for

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the Negro,—no mercy in heaven for the slave? My children!—my children! Why were ye ever born!”

One heart responded to that thrilling cry,—one eye was moistened with the precious dew of holy sympathy. Had Richard Redpath at that moment possessed thousands, they would have been freely offered to redeem that wretched afflicted mother and her little ones.

These softer emotions gave place to indignation, when the purchaser of the forlorn woman proceeded to tear her rudely from the embraces of her weeping children. Finding this no easy task, for despair is strong, he seconded his efforts by applying the cane he held in his hand to her naked shoulders, already seamed with the marks of former ill-usage.

“Monsters! Demons in human shape, miscalled men!” muttered the enraged counterfeit. “When will Heaven avenge upon you the injuries inflicted through hopeless ages upon this unhappy and degraded race? A voice has gone forth into the world—a voice that will be heard, for it is the voice of God—that shall rescue these hapless victims of avarice and bigotry from your accursed grasp!”

A look from his brother reminded him of his assumed character; and placing his back against the wall, he folded his arms across his breast, and said in a low voice to his surreptitious owner, “Robert, this is no joke!”

The sinewy, well-knit frame of the young Englishman soon attracted the notice of several wealthy planters, who came forward to inspect the capabilities of the young slave.

“There is a touch of the European in him,” said one of the group. “He has not the features of the nigger.”

"Something more than a *touch*, brother Baynes," said another. "A thorough black, for my money. The saucy white blood can never be restrained by the dark skin. I don't like half-breeds. They inherit by nature a craving for liberty. The nigger is a mere animal; the mulatto suspects himself to be a man."

"They make clever domestics."

"Oh, curse them! they are neither one thing nor the other. I have too many of them on my place, Joshua Baynes."

"Report says so, and of your own providing."

"It may be so. We cannot reasonably hope that all our speculations are to turn out well. Take my advice, Baynes,—have nothing to do with that chap."

"I like the fellow. To whom does he belong?" he inquired of the vendue master.

"I received a commission to sell him from that shabbily-dressed young man, who is standing on the left of you, in his shirt-sleeves."

"He must have stolen him."

"That's nothing to either of us. I know every slave-owner on the island, but this man is a perfect stranger to me."

Mr. Baynes did not seem quite satisfied with this answer. He hustled across the market, and coming up to the spot where Robert was standing, he asked, rather abruptly, "If that young man of colour was his slave?"

"He is," was the laconic reply.

"A strong, active-looking fellow. Why do you part with him?"

"Simply because I'm no longer able to support myself, and have no need of a slave."

He then related the disastrous accident of the wreck, and the necessity he was under of parting with Sambo.

"He has not been treated as a bondman. He was brought up among us, and considered more in the light of a companion than a slave. His amiable disposition gained for him the respect and affection of the whole family. He can read and write, and cast accounts, and is an excellent cook. He would make a good house-steward, as he is honest and attentive. I should be sorry if he fell to the lot of any one who would degrade him into a field slave. Between ourselves," he continued, "I have no just title to him. In London he was treated as a free man, but my destitution has driven me to the necessity of selling him, and fortunately he is ignorant of the law in these particulars; but that is a matter of little consequence to the purchaser."

"Of course not. You are perfectly justified in making him your property, as he has no other owner."

They now approached the block from which the auctioneer was recommending Richard to the notice of his customer.

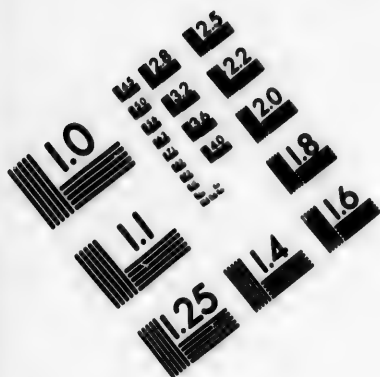
"Do you mean to bid for that chap, Hare?" said Mr. Baynes, addressing his former companion.

"Not I: and if you are wise, Joshua, you will have nothing to do with him. He looks as obstinate as a mule."

"You are mistaken," said Robert. "He is a person very susceptible of kindness."

"*Kindness*," reiterated Mr. Hare, with contempt. "And who the devil thinks of treating a *slave* with *kindness*. Young man, I perceive that you know very little about the management of niggers, when you make use of such language. You must never treat a slave with kindness. It won't do. They are not men, but obstinate, self-willed, malicious brutes. They must be driven, sir."





Number of Children	Percentage of Families
0	18%
1	22%
2	20%
3	13%
4	5%
5	2%
6	1%

A contemptuous flash from the dark eyes of the pretended black did not escape the notice of the planter.

"You may tell me that he is a well-disposed nigger; but I never saw a more untractable-looking devil put up to sale in this market."

Old Baynes had set his mind upon the purchase, and paid very little regard to his friend's estimate of his intended bargain. He was a great epicure, and had just lost an excellent cook, and was on the look-out for another to fill his place. He commenced inspecting Richard with the same cool deliberation that a jockey would use while examining a wild colt he was anxious to break in.

The proud, pampered dealer in bones and sinews seemed upon the whole well pleased with his scrutiny; and Richard, after undergoing a thorough and minute inspection from several merchants and planters, was finally put up to sale, and knocked down to Joshua Baynes, for the sum of five hundred dollars.

The conditions of the sale having been fulfilled, and the money paid down upon the delivery of the property, Robert most reluctantly parted with his whimsical benefactor, without that friendly pressure of the hand he longed to bestow; but which could not consistently be granted to a slave.

He felt a sudden depression of spirits, a bitter remorse of conscience, at thus leaving in unknown hands the eccentric being who, to snatch him from beggary, had made such an extraordinary sacrifice of self.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF BONDAGE.

THE novelty of his situation diverted the mind of the volatile Richard from brooding over melancholy thoughts; and his mercurial disposition not only reconciled him to the strange game he had undertaken to play, but invested it with the charm of romance.

"If slavery be not something worse than the pains of purgatory, and the slave under closer restrictions than the inhabitants of that dolorous region," he whispered at parting to Robert, "you may depend upon soon hearing from me."

Joshua Baynes the planter, into whose hands he had fallen, was one of the richest men on the island. He was the owner of several extensive plantations, but preferred living at Kingston, leaving to overseers and managers the care of his estates. This was partly for the benefit of the sea-breezes—partly to gratify the wishes of his only child, a beautiful girl of sixteen.

Fond of money, and a great speculator, old Joshua was not without his good points. He was considered an indulgent master to his household slaves, many of whom, it is said, might have claimed a near relationship to their owner. In his dealings with his brother merchants, however, he bore the character of a hard, grasping man, who looked at a shilling twice before he paid it away. This love of making money had earned for him a worse reputation abroad than he deserved at home, for he seldom ordered a slave to be punished without he richly deserved it.

Upon the whole, Richard was rather pleased with his new master, whom he regarded as a jolly, comfortable-looking old fellow, who could be easily fed and fattened into keeping the peace; and he entered the splendid house of bondage with as much cheerfulness, as if it had been his legitimate home.

The temporary loss of liberty could scarcely be regarded by our hero as an evil, as he had constantly before him the certainty of regaining his liberty whenever he thought fit to wash his face; and as the situation was one of his own choosing, he did not consider himself a slave, and he bore the abdication of his rights as a man with the best grace imaginable, and entered upon his new duties with such alacrity, that Mr. Baynes secretly congratulated himself upon the possession of such a useful biped.

"You can cook, Sambo?" said he.

"Oh, yes, massa! me know how to make all de good ting. Sambo very fine cook. Allers Massa Redpath's taster. Ole Massa Redpath—him dead long ago."

"*Taster!*—that's an office I don't quite understand—never heard of before."

"Massa no understand—him come so nat'ral, like. Dere is no knowing how de curries, and how de gravies are seasoned, widout tasting. 'Tis de berry soul and stuffing ob de goose—de rich ob de soup—de sweet ob de pudding—and de flavor ob de sass. Massa Redpath allers praise de bootiful French dish dat Sambo make."

The eyes of the gourmand twinkled at this profession of Sambo's culinary skill. Already, in imagination, he was feasting on that boasted dish; and he overlooked the freedom of the slave's speech, while mentally indulging his favourite propensity.

"Sambo," he said, "in what island were you born?"

"In St. Vincent. In Massa Redpath's house."

"Your father must have been a white man, by the texture of your hair, and the colour of your skin, Sambo."

"*My father!* ha, ha! 'Tis a wise child, English massa say, dat know his own father. If white man no cunning to tell dat, how you tink blackee know? Ole Massa Redpath's hair berry black and curly. Me berry like ole massa—he berry fond ob Sambo."

The planter laughed heartily.

"Well, well, Sambo, you shall not want a friend, if you do your duty to me."

"Me nebber tink myself a slave, till young massa sold me dis morning. Him hard-heart, berry, to part wid his ole playmate."

Here the surreptitious slave affected a grimace, something like weeping, which helped to conceal the fit of laughter which nearly burst his throat, in the attempt at suppression. His emotion succeeded in moving the compassion of Miss Betsey, the planter's daughter, who just then entered the kitchen, with a white apron before her, and her hands covered with flour

"This seems a kind-hearted black," said she, in a sweet, natural-toned voice, to her father; "I wish, dear papa, you would give him to me."

"A modest request that, of the young lady," thought Richard, "I should have no objection to the bargain."

"What do you want with him, Bess?" said the planter, pinching his daughter's smooth cheek; "have you not slaves enough already?"

"Yes; but since Paris died, you know, papa, I

have been badly off for a nigger to fill his place. Hannibal is stupid, and Cuffee is as obstinate as a mule, and I have to tell him the same thing twenty times over before he will do it to my liking. This man looks smart and obliging, and will just do to work in my flower-garden, to gather fruit, and water the plants, lay out the table, and assist me in the kitchen.

"Well, well, Bess! you may have him; but you spoil all your slaves with over-indulgence."

"One can't always be finding fault, papa. The poor creatures do as much as they can; and I would as soon be beaten myself as see them suffer."

"Nonsense! girl; you speak as if you really thought they felt a licking as you would do."

"I have no doubt of it," said Betsey, with great simplicity. "If they do not, where would be the use of punishing them?"

Old Baynes laughed.

"It is the only way to keep them in order, and that you'll find out before you're as old as your father. But, hark 'e, Bess; keep a strict eye over this young dog. They say he's a good cook: if so, he will spare you a world of trouble."

And the planter waddled out of the kitchen, with his hands upon his loins, nursing the tails of his wide, loose, linen coat, and humming the tune of Old King Cole.

Sambo now ventured to raise his eyes with a stupid stare to the young lady's face. But how that merry, dark eye brightened, when he beheld in his future mistress, a lovely, simple-hearted, little girl, not exceeding sixteen years of age, with a clear, olive skin, regular features, brilliant teeth, and sparkling black eyes; the laughing face, with all its store of coquettish dimples, surrounded by a rich drapery of

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chestnut curls, that flowed down her slender throat, and spread like a silken veil over her dark-hued, but polished shoulders. Just the young peri to drive a gay, warm-hearted fellow of twenty-four beside himself.

"By Jove! she's a pretty creature; a perfect gem!" exclaimed Richard to his inner man. "The very girl I have been dreaming about for the last ten years. It will be no difficult matter to become the willing slave of such a mistress."

In truth, Miss Betsey was endowed with no great share of intellectual wealth. She was a beautiful toy, and possessed an inexhaustible fund of good-humour and animal spirits. She could dance and sing, and play to perfection. Music was born in her. It lived in her voice, in her laugh, in her light springing steps. If she clapped her hands, they produced a ringing, mirthful sound, as if music was ready to leap out from her fingers' ends. She was just the being to inspire in the generous heart of Richard Redpath the most ardent love. He looked upon her, and vowed in his soul that she should be his wife; that he would endeavour to win, at all hazard, the affections of the planter's daughter.

Unlike the generality of West Indian ladies, who can scarcely move from their seats without the assistance of a slave, Miss Betsey was the active superintendent of her father's household. She was an admirable cook, and had early been initiated by a French *artiste* into all the mysteries of the culinary art.

Harsh and tyrannical as he often was to others, Mr. Baynes regarded his pretty heiress with unbounded tenderness, as the prime minister of his pampered appetite. No person in the island knew better how to season a curry, and give the proper

flavour to turtle soup, than Miss Betsey; and the greater part of the day was necessarily spent by her in the kitchen. Over this important territory she held despotic sway, surrounded by slaves, who interpreted her very look, and flew at her nod.

Such an able auxiliary as Sambo was regarded by father and daughter as a fortunate addition to the household. The young black, who in the capacity of field slave would have been treated by the overseer of the estate with the utmost rigour, and driven to his menial labours with the sound of the cart-whip, was regarded with respect, when instrumental to the selfish gratifications of his master.

Mr. Baynes had another and more important reason for keeping his daughter so closely confined to the house;—she was known to be the richest heiress in Jamaica, and he was fearful that some indigent adventurer might practise upon her youth and inexperience, and entrap her into an imprudent marriage. To avoid this, he had written to his sister, the widow of a rich merchant in London, requesting her to send out her only son, to share his business, and help him to take care of his daughter. He knew, that by keeping the young couple under his own roof, he should still ensure the services of his child, who, out of love for him, would continue to superintend curries, and season turtle soups, until the day he died; an event which Joshua fondly hoped was still far distant.

For fear that Miss Betsey might take it into her little head to please herself before his nephew, Henry Ingate, arrived, she was never allowed to cross the threshold, without he was her companion, or an old maiden aunt, who was too much tormented with rheumatism to be often able to act as duenna to the

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and the smiling young girl, or take any part in the domestic arrangements of the house. Miss Betsey sighed for liberty, with as much impatience as a bird not accustomed to his cage would do, to return to the green woods and the fresh air. Much of her time was inevitably passed among her slaves, and behind her father's back—for mother she had none; she often addressed them with the greatest familiarity, laughing and joking with them about their sweethearts, lamenting that she was debarred from choosing one for herself, and expressing the deepest regret that she was still unmarried.

Miss Betsey had read novels, and thought that she understood a great deal about love; and she considered it a hard case that her father would not allow any young gentleman to enter the house, with whom she might fall in love. It is true, that Antonio De Trueba, a clerk in her father's counting-house, had twice ventured to tell her, that she was as beautiful as an angel, and that he loved her to distraction. She believed the affirmation, but did not like the person who made it. De Trueba was a quadroon, from the island of Cuba, and looked just like an Havannah pirate. She would rather be the wife of an honest nigger, than marry a scamp like him.

Our hero had not been many days in the house of bondage, before he picked up all these family secrets; nor was he long in turning them to his own advantage.

The day after his arrival he was regularly installed into his new office, and with a paper cap upon his head, and a clean white linen apron before him, he looked a very important personage, and enacted my lord of the knife and fork to perfection.

Unfortunately, however, for Master Richard, he knew very little of his pretended art; and when

called upon to compound the rare French dish, which was to establish his reputation with his new master, he formed such a compound of fish, flesh, and fowl, that a well-bred dog would have rejected the precious ragout with disgust.

In this world of humbug, it is a great thing towards your advancement to have a high reputation for any particular art or accomplishment, whether justly or unjustly conferred. It is wonderful what obstacles it will overcome—what mole-hills it will exalt into mountains—what respect and attention it will procure from the would-be knowing crew, who only echo the sentiments and opinions of those whom the world has constituted judges.

Richard fortunately proved the truth of all this, for so greatly was the planter prejudiced in his favour, and so strong was his singular perversity of taste, that the over-seasoned mess, which might have sickened a horse, from its novelty, and the reputation of its compounder, met with his unqualified approbation. Sambo was rewarded with a small piece of silver for his success; and, like Joseph in the house of Potiphar, he was exalted above the rest of the slaves.

That night the chief cook wrote the following laconic epistle to his brother Robert:—

“DEAR BOB,

“Lay out your money in the best way you can, to procure a situation for yourself. I know not when you will see me. I have fallen desperately in love with Pharaoh's daughter, and feel no inclination to leave the flesh-pots of Egypt. From yours affectionately,

“THE CHIEF COOK.”

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW SCENE, IN WHICH SEVERAL NEW ACTORS ARE INTRODUCED
TO THE READER.

JUST after sunrise on the morning of the day that preceded the wreck of the *Maria*, a young girl about eighteen years of age was seen slowly pacing along the beach. The sun was obscured by a thick haze, which hung like a dim veil over land and sea. The air was sultry hot, and not a breath of wind shivered the leaves of the mangroves, or called up the least ripple upon the lead-coloured waters. Nature seemed to hold her breath in dread expectation of some approaching convulsion.

The young girl, whom we shall call Marcella De Trueba, appeared perfectly regardless of the menacing aspect of the heavens, and the deep stillness that reigned over the earth. Her large flat grass hat was placed negligently on her head, and her dark rich curling hair, wet from her recent immersion in the water—for she had just enjoyed the luxury of a bath—hung in thick masses round her face; and never did locks of softer texture, or more jetty blackness, shade a countenance more eminent for intellectual and physical beauty. Her face was a delicate oval, her features of a purely classical cast, while her large, dark, liquid eyes were full of tenderness and sensibility, yet combining in their depths intelligence and power, a latent fire which love could soften, or

passion kindle into terrible brightness. Her stature scarcely exceeded the middle height; she was slightly and elegantly formed, and possessed that indescribable grace of motion, that perfect and harmonious ease, that seldom is found with a coarse-minded and uneducated woman. Yet, with all these personal advantages, an expression of deep and intense melancholy was so entirely blended with every feature of that most unhappy countenance, that it awoke painful suspicions in the mind of the observer, even at the very moment when he pronounced the young syren before him, most lovely.

Endurance was there, firm, uncomplaining; but it was that sort of patience that proud minds gather from despair, when in defiance of fate they have determined to dare the worst—when the harsh tyranny of those whom nature has placed in authority over them, wears down with its constant grating upon the best and truest feelings of the heart, the anchor of hope; and the elastic spirit, which enables the human creature to combat successfully with the sorrows and trials of life, is crushed and trampled in the dust.

Such was Marcella De Trueba, the sister of the young quadroon, whom we have already introduced to our readers.

These young people, half Spaniards by birth, were natives of the island of Cuba. Their father, a young officer, the eldest son of a wealthy and distinguished family, had incurred the displeasure of his friends and parents, by marrying a handsome quadroon, who had lived with him for some months previous to his making her his wife, on the most intimate footing. His attachment to this woman was so strong, that on her threatening, after a violent quarrel, to leave him,

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he sealed his own misery, and for ever alienated himself from his friends by leading her to the altar.

When once Madame De Trueba had attained her object, all her former blandishments were laid aside, and the husband in his turn became the slave of her imperious will.

Ashamed of the low connexion he had formed, and heartily sick of the tyrannical domestic despotism under which he groaned, Don Antonio quitted the Havanna in disgust, and came to reside in Jamaica, purchased a small plantation, and made himself as comfortable as he could under existing circumstances. Nothing, however, seemed to prosper in his hands. His plantation was destroyed by an earthquake; his bankers failed; and one misfortune followed upon another, until De Trueba died of a broken heart, leaving his wife to provide for his two children in the best way she could.

As long as Madame De Trueba retained her personal charms, she did not consider her condition unhappy. She had many lovers, and continued to dress splendidly and keep a luxurious house; and though ladies of respectability declined visiting the beautiful and imperious woman, her villa was the favourite rendezvous of all the dissipated young men of fortune in the island.

The small-pox, that foe to beauty, visited Jamaica—Madame De Trueba caught the infection, and lost, in her conflict with the fatal disorder, all claims to any personal charms. She became ugly in the extreme, and this misfortune, which required the fortitude of a great mind to bear with any degree of resignation, produced the most frightful effects upon this violent and uneducated woman, rendering still more intolerable her arrogant and overbearing temper,

until she became an object of dread and disgust to every one but the members of her own family. They were, of course, soon reconciled to the change, and cared very little for the appearance of one who had ever inspired them with more fear than love.

On her son, Antonio, Madame De Trueba lavished the most extravagant affection, simply because he resembled his mamma; while poor Marcella, who was six years younger, she cordially disliked, because she was the picture of her husband; and from her tender infancy, the young girl had been the victim of her mother's ungovernable and unjust bursts of passion. She had borne from her harsh words and harsh blows, and a naturally strong constitution had been rendered nervous and irritable by a constant system of opposition and unkindness. When Marcella had reached her tenth year, the united extravagance of her mother and brother had reduced them so low, that Madame was forced to part with her comfortable villa, and hire a house in town, which she fitted up for the reception of boarders.

It was here that an English lady, on her first arrival in the country, saw and became attached to the uncomplaining, long-suffering child; and after a few weeks' residence in the house had strengthened her attachment to the young Marcella, she preferred a request to her mother, that she might be allowed to adopt and rear her as her own.

At first Madame refused to listen to Mrs. Ingate's anxious petition, on the plea that she could not afford to purchase an additional slave to supply the child's place, and perform the never-ending tasks required of her. Mrs. Ingate overcame this objection, by obtaining a black substitute in Marcella's place, and adding a large sum of money to propitiate

the selfish mother. Madame De Trueba was unable to withstand the bribe, and Mrs. Ingate was only too well pleased to obtain the freedom of her little *protegé* on such easy terms.

Mrs. Ingate's kindness did not end here. She was a rich childless widow; and though she by no means intended to make the lonely quadroon girl her heir, as she had a nephew and several nieces in England, to whom she had bequeathed, by will, her fortune, she nevertheless was by no means neglectful of her true interests. She bestowed upon her a liberal education, and being herself a person of considerable taste and talent, she lost no opportunity of cultivating the mind of her adopted child.

For six years Signora De Trueba had passed a happy and blameless life with her kind benefactress. But a change was at hand; Mrs. Ingate was attacked with yellow fever, and though still in the prime of life, fell a victim to the disease after a few hours of intense suffering, without having been sufficiently composed to make any future provision for her devoted nurse, the weeping and afflicted Marcella, who considered no misfortune equal to the sorrow of losing a dear and only friend.

Joshua Baynes, the brother and executor to Mrs. Ingate, gave her a few trinkets and books, besides the wardrobe of the deceased; and after the funeral was over, the mansion in which she had passed so many happy years was sold, and Marcella was forced to return to her now miserable home.

The vices of both mother and son had still further involved them in debt and difficulty. The boarding house had been parted with long ago, and the furniture sold to keep Antonio from a gaol. Madame De Trueba sank into a withered, ugly, and forbidding

looking hag; had been forced to retire to a small cottage near the shore, and gain a miserable subsistence by washing linen for the officers of the garrison, in which she was assisted by an old female slave, who was nearly past her work, and of little value as a human chattel, though her tyrannical mistress contrived to get a great deal of labour out of the wretched woman, and to tax what little strength she possessed to the uttermost.

Minerve had been Don De Trueba's nurse, and, during his life, had always been treated by him with the greatest kindness. Since his death, the poor creature's existence had been one of unmitigated toil, harsh treatment, and cruel abuse.

Minerve bore all this, and would have endured ten times as much for the sake of the children, whom she idolized for their father's sake; though, indeed, there was nothing in common between the father and son—even personally they were not alike. But Minerve, with her large, loving, matronly heart, was determined to recognise the father in the child, and to love the gay, reckless, selfish Antonio, with all her soul and with all her strength. She admired his beauty, gloried in his extravagance, and was never tired of praising him to his mother; declaring, that she would work her fingers to the bone to supply him with the means of dressing and appearing like a gentleman. "His father was a gentleman before him—God bless him! and he was as fine a man as his father."

Antonio held a clerkship in Mr. Baynes' counting-house (for Joshua was in partnership with a rich merchant in Kingston), from which he derived a salary of one hundred pounds, and the opportunity of getting a peep at Miss Betsey at least once a day.

The cottage in which Madame de Trueba concealed her pride and poverty, stood on a lonely spot, about a quarter of a mile from the shore. Buried in luxuriant foliage, and surrounded by lofty trees, the pedestrian might pass the spot many times without noticing the small dwelling, so completely was it hidden behind its leafy screen. The great ocean, unseen, but hard by, sent up its tumultuous roar of many-voiced waves, and cooled the hot air with its refreshing breath. Several little huts, belonging to free blacks, were scattered here and there, with their patches of garden and vegetable grounds, divided from the narrow road that led down to the beach by rude wooden fences, or hedges of the prickly pear.

It was a quiet, lonely spot, but the spirit of peace was not there. Human pride and malevolence had converted the paradise that nature made into a perfect hell. Sobs of anguish, and words of bitter import, too often broke the solitude of that smiling retreat. It was a sorrowful dispensation of providence that placed Marcella once more, poor and dependent, in her mother's power.

Assisted by the old negress, she now worked all day, and often far into the night, to maintain her mother. Minerve washed the fine linen, which Marcella ironed and got up for the officers, and performed the lighter duties of the house.

Neither mother nor brother felt the least remorse in seeing such a lovely creature condemned, by their heartless extravagance, to perform the most servile domestic drudgery; her mother coldly remarking, that "Marcella might make her condition lighter, if she would follow her advice. That she could not see why Marcella should wish to be better than her

mother. That she was certain she would never be so handsome, for all the airs she gave herself."

Marcella, a modest, good girl, who had received a moral and religious education, regarded her beauty as an unfortunate gift; a snare, that might lead her to ruin; and the course of life recommended by Madame de Trueba made her blush for her mother, and lament with bitter tears the probable fate that awaited her; for she well knew that Madame would not scruple to sell her person in marriage to the highest bidder; or perhaps regard that sacred tie as not at all necessary, in making her bargain with some rich merchant for the possession of her daughter.

These fears were only confirmed too soon. A wealthy planter met her one day, walking to the town to carry home some shirts she had been making for Mr. Baynes, and was so much struck by her beauty and graceful carriage, that he followed her home, and introduced himself to her mother, as a devoted admirer of her daughter. Finding Marcella proof against all the temptations that wealth could offer, and determined not to lose his victim, he had on the preceding evening proffered to Signora de Trueba his hand in honourable wedlock. Marcella, who only saw in her lover an ugly, illiterate, middle-aged man, who had first insulted her modesty by base proposals; and, baffled in his attempts, had now, from the most selfish motives, sought her as his wife, refused his offer, without thinking it necessary to consult her mother on the subject.

The storm she anticipated when this act of rebellion should be known by her vindictive parent, filled her mind with bitter thoughts, and gave an additional air of melancholy to her pale brow, as slowly she

sauntered along the rocky path that led to her miserable home.

Often did she stop, and look up to the dull, grey heavens, and press her small delicate hand against her forehead, with her eyes swimming in tears.

"Love!" she murmured; "what a profanation of the word. How can I love that man? Yet it would have been pleasant to have left this house of bondage; to have been my own mistress. But freedom with him—oh, heavens! such freedom would be the most abhorred slavery. To be forced to act a lie; to say that he was dear to me when I loathed his company; Marcella de Trueba, it would be better for you to die! To die," she repeated, dwelling long and gloomily on the words, and glancing rapidly at the waters, as they rolled slowly to her feet. "It might be a crime, but surely it would be better to trust to the mercy of the eternal Father, than to the mercy of man."

As if afraid to trust her own thoughts, she stooped hastily down, and patted a pretty spaniel that had belonged to Mrs. Ingate, and was her constant companion.

"You, Ida, are the only friend I have in the world. The only thing that loves me; that I can love. Oh, that I could love my mother, my cruel mother!" she cried, bursting into a fit of passionate weeping. "But how is it possible? My daily prayer to God is, that I may not hate. She does not care for me; she never did; at this moment she is plotting against me—lying in wait for my soul. Oh, that I had but one friend, one faithful heart, that I could trust with this great sorrow—one truthful, kind heart, that would save me from myself, and deliver me from the evil that is driving me to despair!"

She leaned upon the little gate that opened from their garden into the lane, and tried to compose her countenance, and overcome her tears, which, in spite of every effort to restrain them, would force their way down her pale cheeks.

Just at this moment, a woolly black head was thrust through an open window, and Minerve called out, in a low, soft voice, "Marcel—missie, is that you?"

"It is."

"Come round dis way; I want to speak just one littel word to my child."

Slowly unclosing the gate, Marcella entered the garden, and stole softly round to the window that belonged to the kitchen.

"What is it, Minerve?"

"Hist!" said the old negress, laying her finger on her thick lip, and glancing towards the door that led into the little sitting-room. "Massa Abbot here!"

Marcella turned deadly pale, and gasped for breath.

"He talk berry loud. Ole Madam in tantrums. Dere be de berry debil to pay. She come in once, twice; ask, Marcel at home? I say, no; she stamp an' tear like mad. What you do, missie? My heart heavy for poor missie."

"God knows," sighed Marcella, sinking into a chair and covering her face with her hands. "This is too bad. I did not expect to be persecuted by that hateful man."

The door that led into the adjoining room was flung suddenly open, and her mother called to her in a loud, imperious voice, bidding her come in, as she wanted to speak to her. Terrified at the harsh tone, and pale and trembling, Marcella instantly obeyed.

CHAPTER VII.

A GAY WOOPER.

ON entering the mean apartment, which was the only one they occupied, independently of the kitchen and two small sleeping rooms, Marcella recoiled in evident dismay when she found Mr. Abbot seated on the table, slashing the dust from his boot with a light cane he held in his hand; and she knew, by the confused expression of his downcast face, what the nature of his communications to her mother had been. Anger and disdain were strongly depicted on Madame de Trueba's countenance, and as her eyes encountered her pale, trembling daughter, a malicious smile curled her lips.

"How do you do, miss?" said the gay wooer, with a familiar nod; "I hope you are in a better temper than when we parted last night. But lovers' quarrels, I've heard, are soon made up again. This is a hot day for you to be out. If you don't take care, you'll get the fever, and that you'll find a bad job."

"Wilful people are afraid of nothing," said Madame, scornfully. "Marcella, where have you been all the morning? Mr. Abbot has been waiting an hour or more for his breakfast, and nothing ready. I wish, signora, for you distinctly to understand, that you are not to quit the house without my leave for the future."

"I had no idea it was so late," and Marcella

glanced timidly up at the clock. "I only went down to bathe, to relieve a bad headache. I will get breakfast ready in a few minutes."

She was about to leave the room, but Madame de Trueba called her back. "Stay where you are. Sit down in that rocking-chair, and listen to what I have to say."

Without raising her eyes, Marcella mechanically obeyed.

"Is it possible, signora, that you have been so foolish and ungrateful as to refuse Mr. Abbot's generous offer?" This was said in a soft, persuasive voice.

"It is true, mother."

"I told your ma' so, miss, but she would not believe me. Could not imagine how you could be such a little goose."

"What reason do you allege, signora, for your extraordinary conduct?"

"I—I could not love him," sobbed Marcella, in a voice scarcely above her breath.

"Pshaw! What is love?" demanded the hard, unfeeling mother.

"As I understand it, love is a sentiment of pure, holy, and disinterested affection," returned Marcella, the colour glowing upon her pale cheek once more; "as yet I am a stranger to the passion; but I am determined never to unite my destiny with any man who is incapable of inspiring me with a true and disinterested affection. Mr. Abbot has my answer. He is not only an object of indifference to me, but of positive aversion."

"Mighty fine!" said Madam. "A young lady of spirit!"

"Vastly unreasonable," chimed in the planter. "Reading novels has turned the girl's head."

"Made her blind to her own interest."

"Ay, worse than that, to the interest of her family. But don't imagine, signora, that you are to carry matters with a high hand, and have it all your own way, setting my authority at defiance, and daring to act in direct opposition to your parent. You need not frown, and shake your head, for I *will* be obeyed."

"Had my father lived, this sacrifice never would have been demanded of me. He was too kind—too generous to force my inclination. He never would have urged me to marry any one I did not love."

"And do you think, signora, that I loved your father?"

"I should hope so, mother."

"Then you are mistaken; I never loved him, or any man."

"Then why did you marry him, mamma?" said the daughter, hardly able to conceal her disgust and astonishment.

"He was a weak, handsome, romantic young man; too jealous to be contented with the connexion that existed between us, and rather than part with me—for he did love me—he offered me his name, and a handsome maintenance. This gentleman does the same to you. Are you better than me, that you refuse his offer?"

"My father was a man of education and refinement,—young, handsome, noble. The sacrifice was on his side. Mother, you force me to be personal; had such a man offered me his hand, I would have accepted it with joy."

Madame de Trueba's eyes flashed fire.

"Insolent creature! Your father was a fool, and

you are his child. Once for all—will you accept Mr. Abbot?"

"I will not!"

"Oh, Miss, don't be so rash," said the planter; "do mind what your ma' says; she knows what's for your good. You will think better of it when you see the fine place that wants you for a mistress. In spite of all your perverseness, I will be very kind to you—indeed I will. I care nothing about your poverty—will take you just as you stand; I will buy you fine clothes and jewels to your heart's content, and you shall have lots of slaves to wait upon you."

"I care for none of these things," said Marcella. "I thank you for your kind intentions, but I must persist in my refusal."

"Are you mad, Miss?" said Mr. Abbot, with an incredulous stare, and edging quite close to the young lady. "Why, my dear, you won't get such an offer every day!"

"I would rather die than become your wife," cried Marcella, drawing back, with crimsoned cheeks and flashing eyes.

"Die—whew!—Is it not perfectly ridiculous to hear a young girl like you talk of dying in that reprobate sort of a way, just as if death was a thing to be joked about, and could happen to a body every day? Die! yes, we must all die when our time comes. But is it not better, my dear, to die rich than to die poor? Take my word for it,—and I have lived some years in the world, and know something about the sex, having buried two wives, who were as obstinate and as untractable as you can be,—that most women prefer a fat inconvenience to a lean one."

Overcome by feelings of mortification and offended

modesty, Marcella answered this harangue with a burst of tears.

The planter was a conceited, ignorant, matter-of-fact sort of a man, who had come out from England when a boy, in the capacity of gentleman's servant, and by dint of industry had worked himself up to his present position; but he was neither a cruel man, nor destitute of the common feelings of humanity, though coarse and homely in his person and manners, and vulgar in the extreme. The sight of Marcella's tears gave him pain. He could not bear to witness her distress, although he seemed to lose sight of the fact that he was the cause of it. He was a great admirer of female beauty, and had never seen such a pretty girl in tears before; and his awkward attempts to console his offended mistress were perfectly ludicrous.

"There, my dear," he said, patting her upon the shoulder with his huge paw, "don't go to cry in that foolish manner, because an honest man wishes to make you happy and respectable. Your good mother and I will settle the business. You need not trouble your little head about it."

"If I have any right in the disposal of my daughter's hand, she is yours, Mr. Abbot," said Madame, with dignity. "Leave her to me, sir; I know best how to manage her. She *shall* be your wife." This was said in a low voice, and with a furtive glance at her daughter, as the words hissed from between her teeth; and the very tone in which these words were uttered told to Marcella of coming scenes of cruelty and violence that made her flesh creep.

"Thank you, ma'am, thank you," said the planter. "If you don't know her, who else is there as can? I have no doubt that she will come round beautifully

at last. If she don't care for me now, she will by-and-by; we must allow a something to maiden bashfulness, you know. The females often make a great fuss about accepting a man, just to make him value them the more. Good-bye, Miss. Now, don't cry; I will come again, to-morrow. Don't cry, there's a dear good girl. I can tell you, that it makes me feel bad."

Though glad of his departure, Marcella trembled at being left alone with her mother. She dared not raise her head, for she felt that her keen snake-like eye was upon her, and her whole frame shook with a convulsive trembling, which she strove in vain to repress. She felt Madame De Trueba's grasp upon her shoulder, and cowered still lower, until her head sunk between her knees.

"You may well hide your face. Silly, weak fool! selfish, unfeeling idiot! to refuse an offer that would have placed you in affluent circumstances, and rescued your family from ruin. Speak! are you not ashamed of yourself? Do you not deserve the severest punishment?" She shook her violently, and Marcella started to her feet.

"Do not strike me, mother; I do not deserve this harshness at your hands. Have I not worked for you without murmuring for the last two years—often, as you know, beyond my strength, when the rest of the family have been in bed and asleep? Employ me as you like—tax me to the uttermost; I will not repine—I will try to be cheerful and contented; but save me—for the love of God save me—from this detested marriage."

She flung herself at Madame De Trueba's feet; she clung about her knees, and raised her streaming eyes to her face with a look of such unutterable grief,

that it produced a softening effect upon the stern mind of her parent.

"Simpleton!" she muttered, as she relaxed her grasp from the quivering frame of the slight girl. "What is the terrible fate that you foolishly dread?"

"Being forced to enter into a solemn covenant with a vulgar, ignorant man, whom I cannot respect, still less love. Is it not sufficiently revolting to my feelings to be subjected to the licentious advances of a coarse, illiterate being like this Abbot, without my own mother,—who should be the natural protector of my honour,—advocating his suit, and loading me with insults and reproaches, because I refuse to sacrifice myself to gratify her avarice."

"What do you gain, signora, by obstinately refusing an advantageous offer?" said Madame, rather startled at the firmness displayed by her hitherto timid daughter.

"I may gain nothing in a pecuniary point of view; but I retain my self-respect."

"And your poverty—"

"True; but that is not so hard to bear as the reproaches of conscience!"

"Is this taunt meant for me?"

"God forbid!" said Marcella, shrinking beneath the fiery glance of her mother's eye. "My words had reference to no one but myself."

Madame eyed her steadily for a few seconds, then burst into a scornful laugh. "Conscience! How I detest these cant phrases! A poor woman has no business with such an inconvenient thing as a conscience—particularly a poor woman of colour, whom your proud whites look upon as a creature without a soul, beneath their notice in this world, and not worthy of heaven in the next. But to the point,

Marcella. Conscience, or no conscience, I will be obeyed. You must—you shall accept this man.—Refusal is impossible.”

“Why so, mother?”

“We are overwhelmed with debt; this cottage and small patch of land is all that we possess; and it already trembles in the claws of those vultures of the law, who delight to tear out the bowels of the wretched.”

“I had no idea that we were so badly off. Mother, you frighten me! What will become of you—of us all?”

“Ay, that’s the question. I cannot starve in my old age. I scorn to beg. Marcella, I supported you in your infant years; it is to you that I must now look for support and protection. Were I young and handsome like you—once, I was far handsomer—I would not let my mother be destitute of the common necessities of life, while I had the power to help her. But you were always a cold-hearted, selfish, unfeeling girl, incapable of making the least sacrifice for those who ought to be dear to you.”

“Mother, this is most unjust. I have done all that honestly I could do, to procure a living for you and myself, and will still continue to do so; but I will not obtain wealth by dishonourable practices.”

“Is marrying this man a dishonourable act?”

“It is legal prostitution. You may beat me—starve me—curse me, as you have often done before,—but you shall not force me into this unholy union. The remedy against such a monstrous evil is in my own hands. Do not force me to resort to it, lest you deprive your couch of rest, and are continually haunted by the spirit of her, whom you forced in bitter agony to brave the judgment-seat of God.”

Madame De Trueba stared in amazement at her excited child. Never had she heard such a threat from the quiet, patiently enduring victim of her tyranny. There was that in the fixed gaze of Marcella's tear-dimmed eye which she perfectly understood, which she did not like, and which she well knew could not be trifled with.

It was not her interest to throw from her the only probable means through which she might chance to regain both wealth and influence, and she sat down and spoke in a bland and affectionate tone,—

"Listen to me, Marcella, and take my life as an example for your own. I was not your age when your father,—a gay, handsome, young cavalier of fortune,—sought my love. But, mark me, daughter of De Trueba, he did not ask me in marriage—"

"And you, mother, surely you did not listen to him?"

"Pshaw!—wealth and power were not to be cast away by attending to the idle gossip of the world. The reality was mine. I was never inclined to quarrel about terms. I did not love Antonio, but he made me the mistress of a handsome house, dressed me splendidly, and placed me in a position which I could not otherwise have obtained."

She paused. Marcella answered not, but continued to gaze upon her face with a look in which intense interest was strangely blended with aversion and horror. "Could she owe her being to a woman so mercenary—so utterly devoid of shame, that she could speak of her infamy without a blush?" The thought was agonizing; but Madame De Trueba, without noticing the effect her confession had made upon the mind of her innocent daughter, continued—

"We lived very happily together for some time,

until his jealousy was aroused by the attentions paid to me by a brother officer. He accused me of infidelity; I was not backward in answering his reproaches; and our quarrel ended in my threatening to leave him. I told him that I was bound to him by no legal tie; that I was free to act as I pleased; that I would leave him, and take charge of Antonio myself, as I was tired of living with him, and wished to be my own mistress. Never shall I forget his despair. He loved me passionately—he loved the child. He wept at my knees, and implored me in pity to become his wife; and, in a moment of weakness, I bartered my liberty for a life of toil and slavery.”

“And my father?”

“His parents refused to sanction the marriage with one of the accursed race—a despised woman of colour. His father pronounced a younger brother of Antonio’s his heir, and he was forbidden to hold from that hour the least communication with his family. De Trueba had a small fortune, that had been left him by an aunt; this he sold, and leaving the Havanna, came and settled in Jamaica. You know the rest: how one misfortune followed upon another, until your father died, leaving me penniless, and with two children to maintain. This was all I gained by an unfortunate marriage: nor would I urge you to take this step, if you would consent to live with the planter on easier terms. Enjoy the wealth that Mr. Abbot offers you, and when he grows tired of his expensive toy, you can leave him without gratitude and without remorse.”

“Is it to tempt me to commit crime that you tell me this tale of infamy?” said Marcella, sternly. “The worst parents generally retain a sufficient reverence for virtue to wish that their children may

be good. But you—oh, Heavens!—that my own mother should league with Satan to betray me,—should calmly recommend a life of prostitution to her child. Can such things be? Alas! alas! they are only too true!” She was leaving the room, but Madame’s grasp was upon her arm.

“Repeat those words—repeat them, if you dare!”

“You know their import already only too well. This is the first time I have ever resisted your authority, it may be the last. But though it should cost me my life, in this instance you shall find me firm. I reject all intercourse with this Mr. Abbot, now and for ever. I owe to God and to my own soul a higher duty than to obey an earthly parent to commit sin.”

A heavy blow, another and another, followed upon this speech. Marcella neither moved nor shed a single tear. The dark melting eye, before so soft and dove-like, assumed a sullen stare of fixed determination; and once a smile, a bitter scornful smile, as if in contempt of her own degraded position, curled the beautiful lip of the persecuted girl. She was still in the grasp of her enraged mother, when her brother Antonio burst into the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BROTHER.

"WHAT is all this? Mother! mother!—what are you about? Do you mean to kill the poor child?"

"She deserves it!" cried Madame De Trueba, flinging her daughter violently from her. "She will bring disgrace and ruin upon us all!"

"Why, what has she done?"

"Refused your friend, Mr. Abbot."

"Humph! That is bad—something worse than I expected."

"The obstinate fool! Can you wonder that I am angry with her?"

"Your anger is a matter of course," said Antonio, sarcastically. "But really, mother, you are taking a very odd way to win the girl to our wishes. Leave me alone with Marcel. I think I can make her listen to reason without having recourse to blows."

Slowly and reluctantly Madame De Trueba left the room, casting indignant and contemptuous glances on her son and daughter. The moment the door closed upon the vindictive woman, he went up to his sister, and taking her now passive hand, led her to a seat.

"Sit down, Marcel. Don't cry in this violent manner, and tremble like a frightened hare. I want to talk to you calmly and dispassionately. Good God! how cold you are!—how wild you look! Calm yourself. It's no use giving way to these fits

of passion. Mother's bark is worse than her bite, you know that. Now listen to me."

"Spare me, dear brother!—in pity spare me. I am not equal to it just now," sobbed poor Marcella. "I feel so faint. Do give me a glass of water."

She staggered, and would have fallen. Antonio caught her in his arms, and placed her in a chair. "Confound the girl! she has fainted. Here, Minerve, a glass of water. Quick, quick!"

The old negress hurried in, and bathed the temples and rigid face of her young mistress, while Antonio rubbed her death cold hands with some brandy, muttering all the while as he did so,—

"This comes of mother's violence. She is a clever woman—a devilish clever woman; but she's no discretion. The idea of beating the child into compliance! I wonder who would have beat her into submission. Ha! ha! the thought is really amusing. Well, I believe if one wanted to rouse into full activity all the contradiction in woman's nature, to give her one blow would be the very best way to bring about what he desired."

"Missa coming to," said Minerve, gently putting back the heavy black curls that had fallen over Marcella's pallid brow. "Poor, young, Missa;" and the kind creature sighed deeply—and that melancholy voice of the heart contained a world of sympathy.

"You may go, Minerve. I want to have some conversation with the signora alone," said Antonio. "But leave the water, we may want it again."

With eyes full of tears the negress obeyed.

"Marcel, how do you feel now?"

"Only too well," returned the girl, slowly rising from her seat, and fixing her melancholy eyes vacantly on his face. "Antonio, I wish I was dead."

"Nonsense! What good would that do to you or to us? But tell me, Marcel, have you *really* refused Abbot?"

"Yes, indeed, I have."

"Past recal?"

"I hope so. Could you expect me, Antonio, to accept for a husband a man I could not love?"

"Pshaw! He does not expect you to love him."

"Then why does he persecute me to be his wife?"

"Oh, that's quite a different thing. Your romantic notions are all Hebrew and Greek to him. The love you consider so essential to your happiness would prove the bitter drop in the cup. If you loved such a fellow as Abbot, I should pity you indeed. Ha! ha! ha!"

"This levity is distressing, is cruel. What is a matter of amusement to you, is death to me. How can you, Antonio, laugh at my misery?"

"Simply, my dear sister, because the misery is of your own making. Abbot, though not exactly the man that a sentimental young lady would wish to have for a lover, is a jolly, generous, good-natured fellow, who would never have the heart to behave ill to a pretty girl. Let me tell you, signora, you might go further and fare worse. You forget the black drop in your veins. The aristocratical British race are not very fond of mingling their proud blood with the despised African's. Cannot you tolerate the man's vulgarity for the sake of his wealth? If you manage your cards well, you might secure a fortune for yourself, and save your family from ruin."

"Antonio—this from you?"

"Is it not good advice, signora? It is not until a fellow is plunged over head and ears in difficulty, that he begins to take a sensible view of things, and

listen to reason. But softly, Marcella, I don't wish to use threats or blows with you. Yet circumstances exist, which will compel you to accept this man's offer."

Marcella turned yet paler, and her eye asked the question that her lips dared not utter.

"We are involved in debt. This Abbot is our principal creditor. He generously offers to give up all his claims against us—to pay off all that we owe to others, if you will consent to become his wife. Now, there's a dear, good girl, accept him without further delay, and save us all from a gaol."

"I have a gold chain, some valuable jewels, which I have received from Mrs. Ingate. Much as I prize these memorials of a dear friend, you shall have them to liquidate your debts; only save me from this dreadful fate."

"Mere drops in the bucket—not that I despise such an offer. I am very badly off for cash just now, and will soon turn your jewels into dollars. Indeed, Marcel, my own affairs are not in the most promising state. God knows what will become of me, if I cannot persuade Betsey Baynes to fall in love with me. The old fox begins to smell a rat, and has sent to England for his nephew to marry his daughter, and have his immense wealth; and I am told by the slaves about the place, that the young lady begins to talk very flirtishly about her intended husband, so that my chance in that quarter is not so good as it was a month ago; Abbot is our only hope. He must not be rejected. Marcella, you are a generous girl, I am sure you will make this sacrifice to serve me."

"Antonio, I have sacrificed much for you already. But this is out of my power. If I think long over the matter it will turn my brain. You know not what dark and desperate thoughts it calls up in my

mind. I hear a voice for ever tempting me to escape these cruel trials and persecutions, by seeking a refuge in the grave."

"Marcella, this is downright madness, 'tis wicked; the old adage, of 'A short life and a merry one,' is better than that."

"I am sorely beset," said the poor girl, pressing her small hand painfully on her brow; "my mind is all doubt and distraction, I know not what to do for the best."

"Marry Abbot, and enjoy the two greatest blessings that the prince of this world has in his gift—wealth and power."

"And entail upon myself certain misery and self-reproach."

"That is not a necessary consequence; but hark you, Marcel," he continued, in a careless jocular tone; "if you have such an unconquerable aversion to Abbot, and are determined to reject his generous proposals, what think you of my friend, Dolores, the Havanna pirate?"

"Good heavens! what put him into your head?" said Marcella, gasping with apprehension, as if she foresaw some new calamity.

"Only he is here, and as much in love with you as ever. Take care that I do not in order to punish your present folly, lend the bold trader my assistance to carry you off."

"Antonio," said the terrified girl, to whom the name of the pirate was a sufficient bugbear, "I am ill and nervous to-day; give me one week—one little week—to think over the matter. But promise not to mention the name of Mr. Abbot to me during that period, nor let him come near the house, until I have made up my mind to brave the sacrifice you

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require of me, and entreat mamma to cease from blows and menaces until the time expires."

"I promise; now kiss me, Marcel, and try to be a good girl. If this marriage does not take place, and I can't get a lift from Abbot out of the mire, I shall have to accept the Pirate's offer, and ship for the Havanna as one of the crew of the *Defiance*."

Marcella answered not. Her head fell back upon her brother's shoulder, her eyes were closed, her lips firmly compressed, and tears, large bright tears flowed in quick succession down her ashen cheeks, and sprinkled all his garments.

"His words are kind," she thought, "but his heart is as cold as ice. He would sacrifice my earthly and eternal happiness, to secure his own selfish ends."

Marcella was right.

Antonio left her to return to his office, and Marcella, more dead than alive, staggered into her small sleeping-room, and flinging herself upon her narrow bed, gave way to a paroxysm of grief. Many and various were the domestic employments that awaited her rapid and skilful hand. In that wild burst of despair, she forgot them all. Her crafty mother, who had listened to the conversation between Marcella and her brother, was only too well satisfied with the result, to disturb her anguish.

"Let her cry," said she. "Nature becomes exhausted with such violence, and will leave her a passive and apathetic instrument in my hands. The struggle is over, I am sure of her now."

After several hours had passed away, and Marcella did not make her appearance, Minerve was despatched to call her to her usual tasks.

The negress found the poor girl still lying upon the bed, cold, passive and almost inanimate; her eyes

open and fixed, the tears still upon their lashes, and sliding slowly down her cheeks; but she seemed totally unconscious of the entrance of the domestic slave.

Minerve stood gazing upon her for some time in silence; at length, kneeling down by the bed, she took one of the cold, tiny hands in her own, and carrying it to her lips, kissed it reverentially, while her own tears fell softly over it. Marcella started and shivered, withdrawing hastily her hand.

"Who is that?"

"Missie, it is I. It is Minerve."

"Dear Minerve! kind, good Minerve! my friends have betrayed me, you alone remain true."

"Till death, Missie," said Minerve, solemnly.

"But dry up dese tears. De Lord knows, if tears could wash out grief, I'b shed enuf; but I nebber found dat dey did much good. When I berry young gall, I sold away from my mammy; I cry much, night an' day, but nebber see mammy agen. I marry, hab children—purty children. Massa get in debt—sell husband, children—all—all—leabe me nothin' in de wide world to lub, an' call my own. Oh, I cry!—salt water in my heart—in my eyes—ebber running down my cheeks. Eyes sore—heart sore. All of no use; nebber see husband—piccanninies more. Maybee dey dead—maybee in heaben. Tears nebber bring dem back. Maybe dere is no heaben for de black."

"Minerve!" said Marcella, starting to an upright posture in her bed, and for a moment forgetful of her own sorrows, "what put such a dreadful thought into your head?"

"Sure, Missie, God hab turned his back upon us in dis world. Dis no good world for de poor Black.

Ebbery ting against us here. Black nigger's whole life a curse. Noting black any good. Dey say—black as night—black as death—aye, black as hell!—black as de nigger! Widout God change our skin, what good can come to us? We all born to trouble as de sparks fly upwards. It is ob no use being angry wid de white man; de fault is in de colour, not wid him."

"And I, too, am one of this despised race," sighed Marcella—"a child of sorrow from my very birth. Perhaps she is right. The arm of the world is against us. Nature has disowned us,—God frowns upon us, and denies us justice here, or happiness hereafter. Then, why should I hesitate to return to Him the worthless boon He gave?"

She rose from the bed, looked upward with a bitter smile, washed from her face the trace of tears, and followed Minerve to assist in preparing the evening meal.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME ACCOUNT OF ROBERT REDPATH.

"WHAT shall I do with this money, to turn it to the best advantage for myself, and the dear madcap who has obtained it for me, in a manner so extraordinary?" said Robert Redpath, as he sauntered from the slave-market, and bent his steps he knew not whither.

The old adage, "Light come, light go," flashed across his mind; and not being a man of a very sanguine temperament, he came to the sudden conclusion that the gold so questionably obtained would never be lucky.

Now Richard, who, in temper and disposition, was the very reverse of his brother, would have looked upon the whole affair as an interposition of Providence in his favour, and merrily and cheerfully would have set to work to make the most of the unexpected treasure.

But Robert and Richard Redpath, although brothers, and fondly attached brothers, who had never been separated before since their birth, were very different personages.

Robert was shy and sensitive, proud, reserved, and suspicious, naturally inclined to look upon the shady side of things, and very ill qualified by this peculiarity of temperament to cope with the ills of life. Besides, he hated trouble, was not over-industrious, had a tolerable conceit of himself, easily took an affront, and, when once in a passion, it required a

long time to cool him down, and make him listen to reason.

If the truth must be spoken, Robert was fond of money, of fine clothes, and of exciting the sympathy and admiration of others.

Vanity is not always confined to the gay and dashing, the fortunate inheritors of two of nature's best gifts—youth and beauty, who seem to demand, by the right of inheritance, the attention and respect of the crowd. It often dwells under the most quiet, and apparently the most unostentatious exterior, and operates the most forcibly upon minds that take the most pains to conceal it from the observation of others.

Robert, with all his pride and reserve, possessed far more of this failing, so common to our fallen humanity, than his gay, reckless brother; and the sudden and violent manner in which he resented the least affront offered to his dignity, would prove to any one versed in the study of mankind that he was a very vain man.

His present abject appearance touched him more sensibly than even the loss of his property. He fancied that every eye was upon him, while, in reality, few regarded the poor shabby emigrant at all, or paused from their pursuits to give him a second thought. He was pushed rudely about by the crowd, and more than one person had told him to "stand out of the way." His pride was taught an useful lesson—one that he had never learnt from experience before—that he owed the personal respect with which he had hitherto been treated more to his outward appearance, and the respectability of his dress, than to any intrinsic merit of his own.

"Is it possible," he exclaimed, "that a man is

only valued by the cut and quality of his coat? Were I only well dressed, I should command the respect of these strangers. Well then, as so much depends upon a good coat, I must lose no time in procuring one; for while I am in this dirty deshabille I shall be nobody to everybody; and though I shall not be one halfpenny the richer or the better, yet, my dress giving the lie to the poverty of my means, will make me pass current among these heartless worldlings for more than I am really worth. Oh, the shortsightedness and folly of mankind! If Richard could but view the world with my eyes, it would soon tame down the gaiety of his volatile spirits."

With his mind full of these thoughts, and in no very enviable mood, he entered a large store, and inquired of a thin, weazel-faced, satirical-looking man behind the counter, "Where he could procure a suit of ready-made clothes?"

The shopman surveyed the inquirer from head to foot with a satirical grin, and coming to the conclusion that he was some drunken dissipated fellow, who had lost his coat in a tavern brawl, coldly remarked, "That they did not deal in such articles."

"I should be obliged to you, Sir, as I am a stranger here, to inform me who does?"

His voice and manner evidently produced a favourable impression upon the person addressed; but he happened to belong to that class of individuals whose love of approbation is very small, and their combativeness very large.

"How did you contrive to get into such a miserable pickle? Some tavern frolic, I suppose, eh?"

There was nothing on earth Robert hated so much as being asked questions. He considered all such queries as personal affronts, and he answered sharply

—“ I have been unfortunate, and my present condition is purely accidental.”

“ What a fruitful mother of mischief is that dame Accident,” replied the genius of the counter, not a little amused at Robert’s confusion. “ I should have thought, by the colour in your cheek, and your dirty and disreputable appearance, that you could give another cause for your present condition.”

“ What do you mean ?” cried Robert, bending his flashing eyes upon the man.

“ New rum,” said the other, significantly.

“ I never drink. My misfortunes must have greatly altered me, if you can take me for a drunkard.”

“ I beg your pardon, my good fellow. I did not mean to give offence. I perceive that you are in your right senses, which no drunkard ever is. If you want a suit of clothes, just round the corner of the street you will find what you seek. Inquire at the second door of that black looking pile of wooden buildings,” cried he, leaping over the counter, and following Robert to the door, while he pointed to the locality with the yard measure he held in his hand, “ for one Benjamin Levi ; he deals in ready-made and second-hand clothes ; and he will be sure to suit you. He always buys of the hangman all the cast suits that drop from the gallows.”

It is doubtful how far Robert’s indignation at this coarse joke might have carried him, had not a bald-headed, middle-aged gentleman, with a mild benevolent countenance, who had been sitting behind a desk, and, unobserved by Redpath, had listened attentively to the conversation, now come forward, and by his presence averted the coming storm.

“ Do not mind my nephew, Sir,” said he, addressing Robert, for whom, in spite of his miserable

appearance, he felt a strong and growing interest. "He is a bitter caustic fellow, who never has a civil word for any one. I have lost a great many customers by that blunt humour of his. You seem in distress, young man. Are you a stranger in Jamaica?"

Encouraged by the old man's kindly voice and manner, Robert took the seat he politely offered him, and recounted the tale of the wreck, to which Mr. Lawson listened with fixed attention.

"And what has become of your brother?"

This question Robert could not very readily answer, compelled by circumstances to conceal the truth, and he said hurriedly, "That he did not exactly know. Richard had left him that morning, to seek employment in the town, and he would not know the result of his inquiries before night."

"If he expects to get into any respectable house, he must cut a smarter figure than his brother," again responded the man behind the counter; "and the sooner you pay a visit to my friend Benjamin Levi, the better."

This speech won no reply from him to whom it was addressed; and the old man said, with a significant shake of the head, "You must take care, young man, that you are not cheated by his friend the Jew."

"Is he such by name or by nature?" asked Robert, not much interested in the answer he expected.

"Benjamin Levi passes here for a Christian. He visits the English church about once a year, and eschews all connexion with the children of Israel. But he is a Jew, sir; a Jew by birth, and one at heart and in practice, and belongs to the worst tribe of them. He will swindle you out of your money, if he can. But the rogue is a pleasant rogue

—a laughing rogue—who, between jokes and flattery dexterously applied, contrives most effectually to pick your pocket. Take my advice, and get your clothes of some respectable tailor."

"Time is precious," said Robert; "my necessities brook no delay. I am not afraid of your Jew. His is a common character. He has a thousand counterparts in our great metropolis."

"But Benjamin Levi, I maintain, is a very uncommon character," said the old merchant, with great warmth, "and so you will find, before you have been one month in Kingston, perhaps, to your cost. He is a man whom all men hate; and were he to die to-morrow, every honest person in the place would rejoice at the event. But he has made himself so necessary to the leading party here, that though his own set detest his arrogant airs, and laugh at his absurdities, they are too much afraid of him to express their opinions publicly. There is a mystery, sir, about the man; something about him unlike other men."

"Perhaps he is the wandering Jew," said Robert, with a smile, greatly amused by the solemnity of the old man's tone and manner.

"Perhaps he is," returned the other, gravely. "Nobody knows where he came from, or to what country he belongs. He knows everybody and everything, and must have a finger in every one's business. He is the most impertinent, obtrusive, impudent blackguard that ever came to this town!"

"You would think he was the devil, by my uncle's description," said the man behind the counter, with a hoarse chuckle.

"I believe the devil to be a gentleman when compared with him," returned the old man, angrily.

"This fellow has been to all parts of the world, by his own account, and speaks all sorts of languages; while the experience he has of the evil passions of mankind could never have been acquired in half a century, and this Benjamin Levi is not more than fifty years old. In short, sir, a more spiteful, unprincipled, malignant creature never received a commission from Satan to trouble the earth."

"You excite my curiosity," said Robert. "How could a slopseller, a vendor of old clothes, which at all times is but a mean trade, obtain such power and influence among you?"

"Any man may obtain power, who has talent and audacity enough to be eminently wicked," said the merchant. "I have only shown you this man in one of his characters. He assumes many, to impose upon his fellows. But I am encroaching upon your time."

"Oh, not at all," returned Robert; "my time at present is of little value."

"Well, sir, when this same Benjamin Levi first came to this town, he was too insignificant to obtain the notice of any one. He commenced business among us as printer's-devil to the editor of a Jamaica journal, a violent Tory paper, most strenuously opposed to the efforts made by Clarkson and others to ameliorate the condition of the slaves. All who favoured the views of these benevolent and patriotic men (of which I happened to be one) were denounced in this paper as traitors to Great Britain and enemies to their country. This paper had (and still continues to have) a great circulation in the island, and is liberally patronised by all the rich planters and leading men in the place.

"From printing abusive articles in this vile illiberal paper for others, Benjamin took to writing

world, by languages; passions of in half a more than teful, unred a com-

them; and by the dint of vulgar abuse—for the man is wholly destitute of wit or humour—he made himself so necessary to his master, and such a tool to the party, that in time he rose to the dignity of the editorial chair, and shortly after this event he purchased the proprietorship of Mr. Hart, and set up on his own account.

“The paper, always a worthless vehicle for party strife, became, under the new editor’s management, a perfect sink of iniquity; a receptacle for all that was low in morals and base in practice. Through the medium of its pages, the most malicious slanders were constantly propagated against the characters of the best and most respectable of our citizens; and this species of stabbing in the dark was read with avidity, even by those who knew Benjamin Levi’s statements to be perfectly false. But he, being an adept in man’s sinful nature, acted upon that vile maxim, put forth by one as worldly and unfeeling as himself, —‘*Divide and rule*,’—and division and strife he has made amongst us, Heaven knows. His falsehoods and artful insinuations have separated chief friends, while the author of the mischief quietly enjoys the distress he has occasioned, and continues to gain a comfortable independence by preying upon the characters of his neighbours.”

Here Mr. Lawson paused for want of breath, and Robert said, with a smile, “You have described a very amiable personage—a sort of moral hyæna. But why do you suffer such a biped to exist among you? Has no one the courage to pull his nose, or prosecute him for libel?”

“That’s all very well in the old country, sir, where if a man is ever such a bully, he must behave himself, or be kicked out of society. But in a colony,

the thing is very different. Here, men may call themselves liars and thieves in print; yes, even traitors, without the least dread of punishment."

"If the law denies them justice," said Robert, "why don't the injured parties meet together, and toss the Jew and his vile paper into the bay?"

"Ah, sir," returned the merchant, shrugging his shoulders, "it would not free us from the moral pestilence of his presence. I don't think that water would drown him. The people twice hung him in effigy; but this public indignity offered to his person produced no effect. He only laughed at what he termed their *impotent revenge*. He has been sent among us as a punishment for our sins; and we must bear the infliction patiently, until God in mercy is pleased to remove him hence."

"But, knowing the man's character, why do you pay any heed to his slanderous reports?"

"Well, sir, he is so spiteful that every one dreads the venom of his pen, and writhes beneath his lash. He knows his power, and such is the malignity of his nature, that he delights in abusing it."

"My uncle speaks feelingly," said the nephew. "Benjamin Levi has honoured him (for honour I consider it) with sundry affectionate notices in his paper (alias the smut-machine), and he repays evil for evil, by prejudicing every stranger who comes to the town against this tormentor. But, if the little Jew's articles, in print, are bad, the clothes he sells are good enough to suit your purpose. And don't forget to tell him your tale of the wreck, and he will be very civil to you; for it will furnish him with an excellent article for his next paper. And hark ye, friend! if you have any money, be sure that you conceal the fact until your bargain is made, for

if you had a hundred dollars in your pocket, he would be sure to talk you out of it."

"He must be an amusing variety of the species," said Robert, rising to depart.

"What do you mean to do with yourself, after you have made your purchases?" asked the old merchant, who, struck with the fine countenance of the young emigrant, was much inclined to serve him.

"I want to get a situation as clerk in a store," said Robert; "I write a good hand, and am a ready accountant."

"And your name?"

"Robert Redpath."

"Robert—Robert Redpath, the son of a merchant of that name, who resided in Cheapside?"

"The same."

The old man shook Robert warmly by the hand. "I knew your father; we were schoolboys together, and we loved each other well; and I will do all in my power to befriend his son. Your face seemed familiar to me, and there was something in the tone of your voice that strangely brought back to me the recollection of my boyish days. Yes, yes, I see the likeness now. You are Richard Redpath's son, and as such have a claim upon my friendship. Have you any money?"

"Sufficient for my present wants."

"Then just step in, as you return from the Jew's, and dine with me, and perhaps I may be able to help you in procuring a situation."

Robert returned his grateful thanks. His spirits, just before, had been below zero, they now rose to summer-heat; and, elated with the prospect of soon gaining his own living, he proceeded with a light heart to find out the residence of the Jew.

CHAPTER X.

THE LITTLE JEW EDITOR.

ROBERT was not long in finding out the block of buildings to which he had been directed by the younger Lawson. After knocking long and loudly at a black, forbidding-looking door, without receiving any answer, he was about to give it up as a bad job, when he heard a voice calling to him in a loud, bluff tone, from a flight of stairs that led from the street to a small landing above. Following with his eyes the sound of the voice, he perceived a fat, punchy little man, as broad as he was long, standing in his shirt-sleeves at the head of the stairs, which led to an upper loft.

"What do you want, young man?"

"Does one Benjamin Levi, a Jew, live here?"

It so happened, that the little editor was most absurdly sensitive on the score of his religion and national peculiarities, and always stoutly denied the fact of being a Jew, and he answered with a snarl,

"Mr. Benjamin Levi lives here, sir; it is he to whom you speak. But he is a *Christian*, a far better one perhaps than you are yourself."

"I beg your pardon, sir, I was told that you were a Jew."

"By whom?"

"The owner of the store at the end of the street."

"Old Lawson—I thought as much. The spiteful

old rogue. He might, however, have given me a worse name. And pray, young man," he continued, in a facetious voice; "what do *you* want with the *Jew*?"

Robert, before answering, cast rather a rueful glance at his half-clothed figure. The Jew understood the "natural language" (as a great English phrenologist used to call it) much better than if it had been rendered into words.

"Ha! ha! you look like a scotched snake, greatly in want of a new skin. Been on the spree, eh? Young fellows will play the fool sometimes, and it all goes to the support of trade. Come up here, and we will have a bit of talk. I have suits to fit all sorts and sizes of men. I have no doubt that I can soon furnish you with what you want; that is, if you have money. Nothing in the world can be done without money."

So saying he led the way, not into a repository of wearing apparel, as Robert expected, but into a long, low loft, in which several men were employed in printing, and whose labours Benjamin Levi had been superintending in a checked shirt, not over clean, tucked up to his elbows. Robert had heard so much of this singular individual, from his new friend, Mr. Lawson, that his person became an object of more minute scrutiny than he would otherwise have bestowed upon a stranger.

The editor was scarcely over five feet in height, and, in spite of his diminutive stature, could hardly be called a small man, as he made up horizontally for what he missed longitudinally, and in figure resembled a puncheon set upon two short, fat, dumpy legs. His shoulders, head, and neck, were unusually large, and possessed that determined

air of ferocious obstinacy, which generally characterises a savage bull. His hair, short, black and curly, surrounded a bald, unblushing brow, without in the least degree softening its hardened and audacious expression. The features of his singular face were an exaggeration of the peculiarities of his race. There was the cunning, sinister eye, the large aquiline nose, wide mouth, and long, white teeth, so common to his people. But in his case, these features, instead of being sharp and well-defined, were coarse and vulgar, while the massy jaw proved the brutal and animal propensities of the man, and made him an object of distrust and aversion.

A sly, sneering humour lurked in his prominent black eyes, whose covert and sinister glances were partially concealed by a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, which bestrode his huge nose, and seemed, from long use, to have become a second pair of eyes, a part of himself. A perpetual grin severed his red, pursed-up lips, which, meant for a smile, was but an acquired contortion, to hide the workings of the evil spirit within, and display those strong, malicious looking, white teeth, that seemed made to bite and worry his species. Such was the man, (and the picture is drawn from the life,) who stood upon tiptoes, peering at our poor emigrant through his spectacles, with a smile upon his lips and a sneer in his heart.

A love of prying into the affairs of others was a prominent trait in the Jew's character, his curiosity being almost as great as his avarice and love of power; and he commenced his acquaintance with our young adventurer by asking a host of questions.

"You are a stranger here?"

"I am," was the laconic reply.

"From the old country?"

"From London."

"How did you get into your present evil plight?"

"I escaped from the wreck of the *Maria*, the night before last."

"Humph! I saw that vessel go down, and was told by several respectable seamen, who were soon after on the spot, that all on board perished."

"Do you doubt my word, sir?"

"Oh, not in the least; you were more fortunate than your comrades, that's all. In my office I'm bound to believe all tales which have an air of probability."

"And to publish many, I suppose, that have not."

The Jew surveyed the young man with a cautious glance.

"Well, young fellow, there is more under those dirty garments than I at first supposed." Then as if anxious to turn the conversation back to the starting point, he said carelessly,—

"Did you lose much in the wreck?"

"My all."

"In what did that *all* consist?"

"Sir," returned Robert, angrily; "I came here to purchase a suit of clothes to cover my destitution, not to answer impertinent questions."

"Ha! ha! young Englishman, you are easily offended. Passion, like old wine, shows the fine quality of the man; but pride and poverty, though sworn companions, never agree well together. Get rid of the first, and the last will cure itself. It is impossible for a poor, proud man to get rich."

"Pride is the poor man's shield," said Robert;

"it preserves his independence when the world would crush him. It does more than this, it keeps him honest when his necessities tempt him to be otherwise."

"Pshaw! what a confession! When you have lived as long as I have, and seen as much of men and their doings, you will hold a different creed. There are certain very fine words, very common in theory, that have no existence in practice—*Independence, honesty*. How can the one be claimed by creatures dependent upon circumstances for the very air they breathe, and for every blessing that they enjoy, the most important events in whose lives rest as much upon the exertions of others as upon their own? Bah! men are formed by nature to prey upon their kind. Your *honest* gentleman's integrity is regulated more by the fear of the gallows than by following out the golden rule, 'to do unto others as we would they should do unto us:' without money your *independent, poor* gentleman must work or starve; without money or employment, your *honest* gentleman must starve or steal. Ha! ha! those who pretend to neither of those qualities, may, by making use of their wits, obtain a comfortable competency from the fools around them, and be as honest and independent as the rest of the world."

"I hope to differ from you in theory and practice," said Robert; "that is, if all I have heard regarding you be true."

"What, have you been given a character of me already? This is good news. It flatters my vanity. I love notoriety. Why, I find that I am a person of more importance than I thought myself to be. And what did you hear of me?"

"No good," was the blunt reply.

"Better still!" and the editor held his fat sides, and puffed out his large cheeks and laughed, as though he would burst with merriment. "Now I am truly independent. I don't care a snap for what they say of me."

Then, as if the subject was not quite so agreeable as he was willing to make his companion believe, he turned to his imps of the press, and after giving them sundry unimportant orders relative to their business, he offered to conduct Robert to his store, and he would endeavour to suit him with the articles he required.

"I give no credit," said Levi, as he descended the flight of steps that led to the street; "I trade upon the ready money system."

"I ask for none," said Robert; "what I want I can pay for."

"Indeed!" said the Jew, with a saucy incredulous stare; "I thought you said just now that you had lost your *all*?"

The colour mounted to Robert's cheek and brow. Levi marked the sudden change of his companion's countenance, and interpreted his emotion as best pleased himself, and though he did not speak his thoughts on the subject, they were much as follows—

"Humph! I suspected as much. The fellow is a smuggler or a pirate. But what is that to me if he pays for what he gets; what care I, who keeps the key of his conscience? You may be sure that a man never brags of his honesty until he is a thief. I never vouch for the truth of a story in my paper until I know it to be a lie. Honesty and truth are facts, so simple in themselves, that they need no defence. Well, young man," he said, turning to Robert, who had made choice of the best and most

fashionably cut suit in his warehouse; "that fine dress will make a gentleman of you at once."

"Then the block in the tailor's window opposite must be a perfect gentleman," said Robert, with an ill-disguised sneer, for he had seen enough of the Jew to despise him, "for it is accustomed to wear the very best suits."

"Do you compare yourself to a wooden block, young man?" said Levi, dexterously turning Robert's words against himself. "Ha! ha! ha! It is said 'that many a true word is spoken in jest.' But the block opposite looks what it is not, and often passes for a man amongst women and boys, by holding its peace. Young gentleman, be wise—take a Jew's advice—and until you get rid of that captious temper, learn to do the same."

"I feel greatly tempted to let you try the strength of my arm," said Robert. "But no—you are really too little for contempt."

Again Benjamin laughed heartily, a hissing spiteful laugh. "If you come in contact with my head, that soft cranium of yours would never bear the shock. But this is all fun—*mere badinage*."

"I am not used to such rough jokes," said Robert, angrily, but, in spite of himself, hardly able to keep his gravity.

"You have been used to walk upon stilts all your life; I wanted to bring you down a peg, that's all. Come, let us settle for those articles. My time is precious. Those fellows will want me in the printing loft."

"What do they come to?"

"Just forty dollars."

Benjamin Levi looked his astonishment, when Robert Redpath promptly paid down the required

sum. "I can supply you with a handsome watch, cheap for cash. Your dress is not complete without one."

Robert hesitated, and seemed half tempted by the lure, when his attention was luckily diverted from the Jew, by the entrance of Signora De Trueba.

Casting an embarrassed look, first at Robert and then round the store, she stepped timidly up to Benjamin Levi, and placed a ring in his hand.

"Well, my child, what is this?"

"It belongs to a sick gentleman," said Marcella, with a deep blush, which dyed her pale olive cheeks to a vivid red. "He sent me to see if you would take it in pledge for a small sum of money."

"Humph! It must be *small*—what did he expect to raise upon it?"

"He thought, sir, as the ruby was a very fine one, that you would let him have ten dollars on it, until such time as he was able to redeem it."

"Fiddlesticks!" said Levi, carefully examining the ring at the open door. "These things are so easily counterfeited now-a-days, that it is difficult to tell a real gem from an imitation of one. However, this is set in gold and may be worth the money" (he knew it was worth ten times the sum), "and I will accommodate him for your sake. Who is the gentleman, signora, and what is his name?"

"He is a stranger to me, Mr. Levi. I never asked him his name."

"A stranger!" cried Levi, raising his thick black eyebrows, and staring at the beautiful quadroon in a manner which Robert Redpath considered insolent and unwarrantable; "and not known to you, Marcella, even by name? This looks rather suspicious; I must look into this. In what relation do you stand to this gentleman?"

"I am his friend and nurse," said Marcella, turning away with the tears in her eyes. "He is sick, and wants better assistance than I am able to give; money, you know, sir, I have none, and he gave me this ring in order to procure a small sum to administer to his necessities."

"A strange story altogether," said Levi, shaking his head. "I hardly know how to credit it."

"I know that ring," said Robert, stepping forward; "I did know the person to whom it belonged. Young lady," turning to Marcella, "is he living?"

"Indeed he is," said Marcella, turning her beautiful tearful eyes upon Robert; "but he is very weak, and unable to rise from his bed. Oh, sir!" she cried, turning imploringly to the Jew. "Do lend me the money he requires upon the ring!"

"I must first know more upon the subject, and if you came honestly by it," said the hard, sneering man. "Indigent young women often obtain such articles in a way not very creditable; especially when handsome and attractive, like you."

The eyes of Robert flashed fire; he turned them from the sordid Jew to the weeping suppliant. "Young lady, return the ring to the right owner. I will give you the money you require upon it. Nay, do not draw back; I am not a Jew, but the sincere friend of him for whom you plead. Take the money without hesitation, and tell Henry Ingate that Robert Redpath sends it; that he, and his brother Richard, escaped from the wreck, and will lose no time in coming to see him."

He left the store, and walked quickly down the street.

"So," soliloquised the Jew, "this is old Baynes' nephew—the man that is to marry his rich daughter

—I see through it all. He is already provided with a mistress, and cares little for his intended wife. Ah, I will see how old Josh likes this. I owe him something for his contemptuous manner of speaking of me to this young chap. This is news to sweat down the old porker's fat."

Here the torrent of spite was arrested by Marcella, gently requesting him to restore the ring.

"The ring, my dear, is in safe keeping—I shall not give it up to any one but the lawful owner. Have you finished making the shirts I gave you last week?"

"They are made, and I should have brought them home to-day, had not other things engrossed my time. You shall have them to-night."

"Ah, I can easily imagine; when young ladies turn nurses to sick gentlemen, that they are apt to neglect such trifling duties as providing for the wants of their families. Don't blush, pretty one. Those red cheeks tell tales. I have half-a-dozen more for you to make, and the person requires them immediately; that is, if you are not *too* much occupied with the sick man."

"You must excuse me for refusing your offer," said Marcella. "It is impossible for me to make such fine shirts at the low price of a quarter dollar each. I can gain more by washing them after they are made."

"Phoo! nonsense! you little extravagant jade. How can you employ your time better?" cried the editor, familiarly patting her on the shoulder. "Not in making love to young men. Eh!"

Marcella drew indignantly back, as if his touch were contamination, and instantly left the shop.

Robert Redpath had scarcely reached the store of

Mr. Lawson, when some one touched his arm. He turned quickly round, and was astonished to see before him the blushing face of the beautiful quadron.

"Mr. Redpath," said she, in a low and hesitating voice; "I don't know how to apologise to you for this intrusion; but as you say you are a friend of Mr. Ingate, will you oblige him and me by not mentioning to any one that he is alive, and in this place?"

Not knowing what to make of this odd request, Robert continued to gaze upon the lovely girl, without fully comprehending her meaning.

"Ah, you don't understand me," she cried, with an increasing air of agitation. "It is his secret. He does not wish it known at present. Will you promise not to betray him?"

"Certainly, if it is his request. But why this mystery? would it not be better for me to go and nurse him, and relieve you from such a fatiguing task?"

"The task is one of my own choosing. Mr. Ingate will see you when he is able to leave his bed. At present he wishes to remain *incognito*. Your coming to see him would be attended with trouble and inconvenience."

"I am glad to find that he is in good hands," said Robert; and added, with a sigh, "Who would mind being sick if he had an angel to attend his couch?"

"Then we may depend upon your silence?" said Marcella, gazing anxiously in his face, without seeming to notice the compliment contained in his last speech.

"Implicitly. I know few persons here, at any rate, and it is no affair of mine."

"God bless you, sir, both for the loan of the

money you gave me, and for your kindness. I trust Mr. Ingate will soon be able to thank you in person."

And turning down another street, the beautiful apparition vanished.

Returning to the inn, Robert Redpath called for a room, and restoring to his person the dress and appearance of a gentleman, he sallied forth, to the no small astonishment of Mr. Bass and Mungo, to dine with Mr. Lawson, and talk over his meeting with Benjamin Levi.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW RICHARD REDPATH SPED IN HIS WOOING.

WE must now return to our friend Richard Redpath, and give some account of his doings.

Our hero lost no opportunity in trying to make himself agreeable to his pretty young mistress, and popular with his fellow-slaves. In this latter object he was eminently successful. Generous, light-hearted beings like Richard, are certain to obtain the good-will of their fellows, and he was already a great favourite with them all. As to his fair mistress, as far as approving of his services, and the devoted attention he showed to her most minute commands went, he had nothing wherewith to complain, but was regarded by her with especial good-will, as a very trustworthy and useful slave. She frankly declared that he was a fine fellow; the most industrious, handy, and polite domestic that had ever entered the house.

He was the best-looking nigger, too, that it had been her lot to see. It was a thousand pities he was a darkie; as his fine face, and light, graceful figure, would have been altogether charming in a white man. Beyond these well-merited encomia, Miss Betsey showed no further interest in her devoted slave.

"It will not do," said he; "individual merit, I see, will never overcome the unjust prejudices of colour and caste. Yet, it would have been very gratifying

to one's vanity, to have been loved by this pretty simple-hearted child of nature, for one's self: I have never alluded to love. Hang me! if I won't make the trial: if I fail, I can only be whipped, or sold to a new master."

While these thoughts glanced through his mind, he was told by another negro that Miss Betsey was in the garden, and had sent for him to water her carnations.

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As he approached her favourite parterre, with a well-filled watering-pot, old Joshua Baynes waddled up the smooth gravel walk as fast as his fat legs could carry him.

"Betsey, Betsey! where are you? Ugh! ugh! I'm quite out of breath."

"What's the matter, papa?" cried the little black-eyed flirt. "Don't you see I'm busy, tying up my flowers?"

"Pshaw!" muttered the planter, taking off his broad straw hat, and mopping the perspiration from his bald head with his handkerchief, "you are always attending to some nonsense or other when I want you. Leave the flowers to Sambo, and come to me this instant."

"La, pa'! how you frighten me," said Betsey, dropping a fine bouquet of roses, and running to him in a flutter; "has anything gone amiss?"

"I have bad news for you, child—very bad news," and he shook his head ominously. "You have lost your husband, Bess. My nephew Henry is drowned. He was a passenger in the *Maria*, the ship that went down in the squall the other night. Dear, dear, such a fine young man! What will his poor mother say? Ten chances to one, that she lays all the blame upon me, as I wrote for him to come out. Don't

look so pale, girl; there are other men in the world."

"La, pa', you don't say—well, how sorry I am! It may be an age before I'm married now; and all my fine wedding dresses will be out of fashion. Poor cousin Henry! To be sure, I never saw him, so I can't be so sorry as I ought. I am sure I should have loved him very much. Dead! and shall I have to go into mourning, pa'?"

"Indeed you will, Bess. It's the very least you can do, to pay this mark of respect to his memory. Don't cry; that's a good girl. It's of no use taking it so to heart. You are young—plenty of time to look out for a husband, yet. It's so provoking to see our best schemes fall to the ground. Henry was the last male on either side of the house; my favourite sister's only son. Poor Hannah! what a terrible blow to her. It has vexed me so; I have lost all appetite for supper. Sambo, what are we to have to-night?"

"Curried wood-pigeon, massa. De rice steeped in Madeira wine; him berry nice indeed."

"You make my mouth water, Sambo; I want something relishing, to console me under my present distress."

Away toddled the mountain of obesity, the recollection of his dead relative drowned in pleasing anticipations of the coming feast.

"Sambo," said Miss Betsey, who had a foolish habit of gossiping with her slaves, "my husband is dead."

"Missa a widow, den?"

"Not quite so bad as that, Sambo. If I were a widow, I should have to tuck up my hair, and put on a hideous cap and bands; and I could not marry for a year to come."

"Such a lubly young missa no get husband for twelve long months? Aha, dat nebber do. De berry monkey shake his head at dat."

"Ah, Tippoo, you beast! you wretch! what are you about? you have broken my best carnation," cried the little flirt, striking a pet monkey, which was the incarnation of all mischief, with a willow wand she held in her hand; "I wish you were dead, I do."

"Missa cry to make her pet alive again, berry soon. I wish I were Tippoo."

Here followed a deep sigh, and a movement of his hand in the direction of his heart.

"Wish you were a monkey, Sambo? That would be worse than being a nigger. The monkey cannot speak, and you can."

"Is dat de only difference?" said Richard, hardly able to suppress a smile, "between de black man an de monkey? Now, missa, me gib to monkey de preference. He hab no voice to speak his grief: de black man hab de voice, but him dare not utter de big thought in his sad heart."

He looked full in Miss Betsey's face, with his large, bright, eloquent dark eyes, until she blushed as red as the carnations she held in her hand.

"Why do you sigh, Sambo, are you unhappy?"

"Yes, missa. Sambo berry much unhappy: when me sigh, den my heart speak—no put him to silence. Negro hold his tongue; he no hold his heart; Sambo's heart berry large."

"And what does your heart say, Sambo?" asked Miss Betsey, her natural coquetry getting the better of prudence.

"Ah, missa Betsey, my tongue no tell my heart's secret; Sambo die furst," and turning from the fair

querist, Richard bent with greater assiduity over the flowers he was watering.

Now Miss Betsey had a pretty shrewd guess as to the nature of Sambo's secret, for female vanity is a quick interpreter of thoughts; but she wanted to hear it from his own lips, and scarcely knew how to bring it about, without compromising her dignity. This was truly holding the candle to the moth, to watch it fluttering in the flame.

Just then Richard discovered the bouquet which she had dropped on her father's coming into the garden, and, gathering up the scattered roses, he proffered them with a low bow to his fair young mistress.

"Sambo," cried Miss Betsey, colouring and drawing back, "I cannot take them from your hand."

"How, Miss Betsey?" said Richard, reddening in his turn, and forgetting his assumed character, in surprise at the frown that had gathered on her brow.

"You are a slave," she said, haughtily, "I never receive flowers in that form from the hand of a *slave*, without, indeed, they were sent by him from his master."

"I see what you mean, Miss Betsey. The flowers have lost their beauty and fragrance by being touched by a black," said Richard, in a voice, and with an air, as proud as her own; "I am *your* slave; am proud of being the slave of a lovely woman. But no one on earth shall call me so but yourself."

As the bright colour burnt through his swarthy cheek, and his fine eyes lighted up, Miss Betsey gazed upon her excited companion with fear and wonder, not quite unmixed with a growing admiration. She asked no explanation of his strange conduct, and was not actually displeased at the

tumult of passion she had caused in his breast, but returned to the house with new and unusual sensations thrilling through her own. Love had entered her unguarded heart, and, frightened at herself, she fled from the presence of him who had inspired it.

Richard stood rooted to the spot, unconsciously deluging the few carnations the monkey had left uninjured with floods of water. He was at length roused from his reverie by the loud, sharp ringing of the supper bell.

"Sambo! Sambo!" shouted a dozen voices; "What de debil are you about, standing star-gazing there," said the black butler, "an' the master ram-paging for supper?"

"Good heavens—the currie!" cried Richard, starting into consciousness, "I had quite forgotten it. Mister Tippoos, you must bear the blame of this."

He hurried to the house, in his confusion running against, and overturning, a fat female slave, who was leaving it in search of him.

"Hab pity on your back, Sambo!" she said, good-naturedly forgetting her own, that was smarting from the fall; "dere is no supper on de table, an' ole massa beside himself. Missa Betsey crying like fun. He swear him lick us all."

"You black scoundrel!" roared the enraged planter, as Sambo presented himself before him with a grin, "Where is the supper you promised me?"

"Massa, Tippoos best answer dat question. He drink up all de wine, an' throw de rice out ob de window, and put de feathers ob de pigeon in de stew."

"Why did not you wring the beast's neck?" groaned the disappointed gourmand.

"Me no make Miss Betsey cry; she love de ugly

face of de yellow monkey beast ten tousand time better dan de poor black man." Here he cast a sly reproachful glance at Miss Betsey.

"Well, Sambo," grumbled forth the planter, "I forgive you this time. Although I would have you to understand that I consider such conduct in a cook perfectly inexcusable. You might have watched the motions of that imp of darkness, and prevented him from destroying the food."

"Ah, Massa, dere is no being up to de capers of dat beast. Last night he got into de closet, and drank up a bottle of Massa's best wine. I found him dis morning on de carpet, as drunk as a fidlar, laughing and funning with the cat."

The planter seemed rather to doubt this passage in the private memoirs of the monkey; declaring "that *black apes* were as fond of wine as their *bettters*, and that he believed Sambo laid his own faults upon the monkey; but if ever he served him in that way again, he would flay him alive!"

Peace was at length restored. Some other delicacy was at length provided by Miss Betsey for her father's supper, and Richard ran laughing up to bed in the attic, blessing his stars that he had come off with a whole skin.

Miss Betsey, instead of resenting the slander cast upon her ugly favourite, lay pondering over the scene in the garden for the greater part of the night, and wishing from her very heart that Sambo was a white man, or even a free man of colour.

CHAPTER XII.

A FATAL RESOLUTION FRUSTRATED BY A STORM—A WRECK—AN OLD MAN'S STORY, AND A YOUNG MAN'S APPEARANCE ON THE SCENE.

WE must, in order to connect our story, go back for a few days, and follow Marcella De Trueba to her home, and find out in what manner she had become acquainted with Mr. Ingate, the gentleman intended by Joshua Baynes as a husband for his pretty daughter. We left her, on the evening of the wreck of the *Maria*, reluctantly following Minerve to prepare the evening meal for her mother and brother. While engaged in making the coffee, she overheard Madame De Trueba and her son in high dispute in the next room, and reasonably enough concluded that she formed the subject of the discussion.

"It is better, Antonio," said Madame De Trueba, "that *she* should be sacrificed, than that all of us should be ruined. You are mad to yield to her whims. Give her time, indeed! What—to strengthen herself in her disobedience? Now is the time!—now or never!—strike while the iron is hot! Abbot may repent of his bargain, and we may never have such another chance of getting rid of this troublesome girl."

"Mother, you are too cruel. You speak of this dear lovely girl, as if her very presence was hateful to you. Hang me, but my conscience reproaches me for doing the least violence to her feelings; and,

if I were not so desperately situated, I would never urge her to the step. Abbot is a rude brute. It is impossible for a girl of Marcella's intellect, taste and beauty, to tolerate the wretch."

"Ah, this comes of educating her," said Madame, bitterly. "Had she been left to grow up in happy ignorance, we could have moulded her to our wishes. As it is, she looks upon herself as vastly superior to her mother, and treats me and my advice with contempt."

"Well, mother, that has little to do with the matter before us. Will you grant her the indulgence she requires, or will you not?"

"I will not. Abbot will be here to-morrow, and she must come to a positive decision. You will see if I do not force her to say yes."

Marcella could listen no longer. She felt sick and faint, and clung to the table for support.

"I will never live to be his wife!" she said. "Thank God! the means of escape are in my power."

"Missie ill?" and Minerve, who was watching her anxiously from her post at the fire, stole to her side.

"Oh, no, Minerve,—I am well, quite well. There, carry in the coffee and these cakes, and tell mamma that I have a bad headache, and cannot come to the table. I am going to lie down again; and mind, Minerve, do not disturb me. I shall be better after a little sleep."

She stole back to her room, and sat for hours upon her bed, with her hands clasped together, and her eyes vacantly fixed on the dark clouds that were gathering in the west. There was a sullen calm in that seemingly inanimate face, that strangely cor-

responded with the breathless repose that preceded the tempest. Once or twice she smiled bitterly, and pressed her hand to her head, as if a lightning flash of thought for a moment had brightened the dreary prospect of the future, or revealed more clearly the certain despair and agony of the present. The fatal thought of self-destruction having once fairly been indulged, momentarily acquired new strength, until she had pushed her purpose "to resolve," and had determined, once and for ever, to free herself from the insufferable domestic tyranny under which she groaned.

"I am weary of life. The burden of existence is intolerable. I am content to lay it down. It is less sinful to die, than to live in this constant rebellion against my better self."

She leant from the open casement to get a little air. The night was close, and suffocatingly hot. Not a breath of wind ruffled the water or stole through the branches of the mangroves. The moon, enveloped in a smoky haze, threw a sickly faint light upon the scene, that served rather to increase than dissipate the gloom that rested upon the face of nature.

Marcella sighed deeply, and throwing a light wrapper over her shoulders, proceeded cautiously to open her door. To escape from the house without detection was not a very easy task.

The cottage was small, and on the ground-floor. One tolerably large room occupied the front of the house, and opened on to a verandah: a passage led from this, in an opposite direction, to the kitchen. On each side of this passage there was a small bedroom, the one occupied by Marcella, the other by Madame De Trueba, Antonio having to make his bed

on a sofa in the parlour, through which Marcella must pass, and Minerve sleeping in a bunk in the kitchen.

To get into the open air, she must pass her mother's door, which was always open during a hot night, and her bed directly fronted the passage. If she went through the parlour, she would in all probability awaken Antonio, and she could not pass through the kitchen without rousing Ida, and her 'larum would bring all the household to the spot; but, whatever might betide, she was determined to make the attempt.

With noiseless tread she crossed the passage: her step was on the threshold of the kitchen-door, but, just as she anticipated, one wakeful ear detected the intruder. Ida sprang upon her mistress with a joyful bark.

"Minerve! is that you?" cried Madame De Trueba, sitting up in her bed.

"It is me, mamma."

"What do you want out of your bed at this hour, signora?"

"Water. It is suffocatingly hot. There is a storm gathering. I am parched with thirst."

"There is a jar of water on the parlour table; and, hark you, Marcel, bring me a glassful. It is, as you say, dreadfully hot."

Marcella struck a light, and went into the parlour. To her infinite surprise and joy, Antonio had not yet returned from the town. After filling the glass, in doing which she purposely stumbled and made much noise, she gently opened the door that led into verandah, and leaving it open, returned to her mother's chamber with the water. Her hand trembled as she handed the glass to Madame De Trueba.

"Marcella, you look ill."

"My head aches," was the brief reply.

The subdued sad tone of her daughter's voice did not escape Madam's notice. She looked at her earnestly for a few minutes. "Marcella, I did not mean to strike you. You provoked me to it by your obstinacy. You must learn to forget and forgive. Your brother assures me that you mean to be a good girl, and act as we desire; so give me a kiss, and let us be friends."

"God forgive us that we have ever been otherwise!" sighed Marcella, as with a desperate effort she stooped down and kissed the wrinkled brow of her selfish parent. Their eyes met; conscious of the crime she meditated, Marcella turned weeping away.

"Go to your bed, foolish girl. This perpetual whining spoils your beauty. A little sleep will refresh you."

"It will. I long for sleep,—deep, unbroken, dreamless sleep. A sleep undisturbed by the phantoms of waking misery. Good night, mother. But give me the glass. I must refill it for myself."

She left the room, closing the door intentionally after her, and in a few minutes stood alone beside the waveless sea. The hot breathless night shed no balm around to soften the iron purpose to which she had braced her mind. What sad reflections on the past!—what awful and mysterious forebodings for the future!—that spiritual future, the solving the great riddle of life!—passed in rapid succession through the heated brain of the young girl.

Sad as her lot had been, with few sunbeams to cheer her long desolate day of weeping, it was yet hard to die,—to die in the fresh spring of youth and beauty. Might not better times come? Was it

right to rush unbidden into the presence of the dread Creator, and dare the unknown sentence of his wrath? For the murderer, there was the hope that he might repent of his crime, and be reconciled by the blood of the Redeemer to the offended God, whose laws he had outraged. But the self-destroyer dies without hope. For him there is no retrograde step. His last act is one of open rebellion against the majesty of heaven. He anticipates eternal death, and becomes his own executioner.

Full of such perplexing doubts and fears, Marcella wandered on without noticing whither. The weakness of the flesh combating with the stubborn wilfulness of the spirit, which had resolved to do and dare the last act of human folly and wickedness. Her mind, tossed and torn by contending emotions, was too much engrossed by its own misery to notice the rapid changes that were taking place in the outward world, to which her eyes were partially closed.

"The sky is changed—and such a change!"

She saw not the clouds hurrying rapidly over the sky, driven onward by the rushing blast, which nearly lifted her from her feet, and made the solid rocks tremble. She heard not the voice of Ocean, rising in his wrath, and lifting up his mighty billows in defiance to the prince of the powers of the air. The moon was blotted from the heavens, thick darkness gathered over sea and shore like a funereal pall, and Marcella, startled from her visions of madness by the vivid flashes of lightning which blazed around her, stopped at length in her frantic career to tremble at the storm.

Yes; she, who a few minutes before had thought little of daring the judgment-seat of an offended

God, now trembled like a reed before the ministering spirits sent to execute his purpose upon the earth.

"Oh God! have mercy upon me, a sinner!" she cried, as, sinking upon the beach, she buried her face in her hands, to shut out the broad sheets of lurid flame that momentarily revealed the awful scene around her. The thunder burst in terrific peals above her head; the hurricane, as it swept over her, lifted her long dark locks upon its sounding wings, and deluges of rain poured down upon her prostrate form, as she lay in silent horror, the very sport and plaything of the elements. At length there came a lull. The tempest seemed to have exhausted its fury; but a sound more mournful than the voice of the howling storm smote her ears,—the signal of a ship in distress,—"The minute gun at sea!"

Marcella started to her feet, and turned her face seaward. The moon was wading through the dark billows of the scattered thunder clouds, and she distinctly saw a fine merchant vessel lying within two hundred yards of the shore, broken and dismasted, the sea at every sweep making a breach over her deck, and threatening instant destruction. Black objects were crowded upon that deck, and cries for help were mingled with the shrieking of the pitiless blast.

"God help the poor creatures!" she exclaimed. "And must they perish?"

"I fear they must," said an answering voice near her, as an old seaman, who had been startled from his sleep by the discharge of those dismal guns, joined her on the beach.

"Is there no help?"

"None but with God!" returned the old man,

(who was none other but Ben Waters,) with a sigh. "You see, my dear woman, the vessel has been driven by the hurricane upon the reef, and she is a total wreck, and fast going to pieces. The big waves that break upon the rock render all approach to her by a smaller craft impossible—if, indeed, any boat could be launched with the wind dead upon the shore, and blowing a perfect hurricane like this. Alack! alack! 'tis a dismal sight! The poor human critturs! to be unable to give them the least assistance goes to my old heart. A sight like that allers brings the salt water to my eyes. Natur' has her high tides as well as the ocean, and the heart is often wrecked in the storm."

Shading his eyes with the back of his hand, the old man looked long and fixedly upon the wreck.

"It's all over with her. See! see! she parts asunder!—her crew are struggling in the water! Oh, Lord God! have mercy upon the souls that thou hast given to destruction!"

Again the clouds swept over the sky. Again the mighty blast pealed over land and wave, and when the moon emerged from her veil of clouds, the vessel had disappeared altogether in the boiling surge.

"What has become of the ship?" asked Marcella, with breathless interest.

"She has sunk."

"And the men?"

"Are in eternity! Well, 'tis hard to think on; yet, after all, 'tis no more to die so than on one's bed,—of the two, I would rather make my choice of the sea. But, my good girl," he continued, turning suddenly to his companion, "have you a friend or lover among yon unhappy crew, that I find you

abroad, and alone upon the beach, on such a night as this?"

"Thank God! I am spared that agony," said Marcella. "Friends are scarce in this cold-hearted world. Alas! I have none to lose."

"How, none? So young and well looking; whose fault can that be?"

"My own, perhaps," said Marcella, bursting into tears. "I cannot love those with whom my lot is cast; and, weary of myself, and all things under the sun, I sought this spot to die. My hour, it seems, is not yet come. Leave me, I beseech you; I wish to be alone."

"No," said the seaman kindly, but firmly; "that I will not do. There is something in your look and tone which convinces me that all is not right within, like the lull in the gale, that gives it time to recollect its fury. I am but a rude seafaring man, and have ploughed the salt brine from boyhood to old age; but I have seen somewhat of the world in my day, and know somewhat of the rocks and shoals that lie in the track of the best sailing vessels on the ocean of life; and I may be able to give you a bit of wholesome advice, that may teach you how to haul off the ship from the lee shore, before she is stranded among the breakers."

"I know that I have acted wrong," said Marcella, in a deprecating tone. "There is nothing that you can say to me which can give me a worse opinion of myself. But I am so unhappy, so sorely beset, that I have no longer fortitude to cope with the sorrows of my destiny."

"What dreadful crime have you committed, that you are so eager to ensure your own damnation?" said the old man, bluntly.

"Damnation! that is a harsh sentence."

"Harsh, but true."

"Dreadful!" cried Marcella, clasping her hands in a sort of gloomy frenzy. "Can it be really as he says?"

"My dear young lady, sit down upon this rock. The day is breaking. The storm gone, and left no trace on the waters, or in the heavens, of its devastating course; and let us reason together of righteousness, temperance, and of the judgment to come."

"No! no! I dare not. Such thoughts would drive me mad."

"Then, tell me the story of your grief. I am an old man, old enough to be your grandsire. My heart is not hard like my hand, or weather and world-beaten like my face. I may be able to help you. We none know how much lies in our power to serve the other."

Encouraged by the kind old man to unburthen her mind, Marcella seated herself beside him, and, with sighs and tears not a few, revealed to his attentive ear the history of her domestic wrongs and sufferings, and the strong temptation under which she was then labouring, to commit suicide. He listened with earnestness and emotion—his strongly marked features at times quivering with emotion. When she ceased her strange confession, he spoke with energy and decision.

"Young lady, you have suffered much, and your situation is a very painful one; but, bad as it is, it does not warrant you to try and escape from it by the commission of a great crime—a crime for which there is no repentance in this world; and God knows how punishable it may be in the next. Return to your mother and your home. Submit yourself

humbly to the will of the Eternal Father; pray to Him to forgive you for the great sin you premeditated, and He will instruct you what to do."

"I have no home," said Marcella, bitterly; "I cannot—I will not return to my mother's dwelling."

"You are wilful," said the old man; "I pity you from my soul, but I cannot excuse your guilt. The crime you meditate is so selfish, do you see, so cowardly; shows such a want of confidence in the goodness and mercy of God, that it appears to me the very worst act that a human creature can commit."

"It is nowhere forbidden in the Bible," said Marcella, who felt an obstinate spirit rising in her heart, and resisting the homely trite admonitions of the old sailor.

"You have read your Bible to very little purpose," returned he, quickly, "if you can find anything in it which justifies an act of rebellion against the heavenly King. You tell him plainly by this act, that you despise His laws, and dare to resist His authority. That you consider the life He gave you of so little value, that you fling it back to Him as a worthless gift; and prefer eternal misery to the patient endurance of a few sorrowful years on earth. Oh, my dear young lady, think much, and pray often, before you take such a fatal step. Besides, is there not something of a revengeful feeling, which instigates you, as it does most women, to the commission of this crime?"

"Revenge!—against whom?"

"Your mother."

"Nay, God forbid!"

"Think again."

"Explain yourself. I cannot comprehend your meaning."

"Look here, then," he cried, emphatically striking the palm of his left hand with the first two fingers of the right, and looking earnestly into her face, while something like tears gathered on the thin grey lashes of his eyes. "Did you not think that the manner of your death would shock and surprise her? That knowing that it had been brought about by her unkindness, would fill her mind with remorseful self-upbraidings?"

Marcella was silent. She knew too well that much, too much of this feeling pervaded her mind at that very moment. She had hoped that her mother, who had never shown any regard for her during her life, would be filled with horror and remorse when she received the tidings of her miserable death.

"Yes," continued old Ben, "I knew that I was right. You are too honest to deny the truth. Self-destruction is too often brought about by this cruel feeling—the hope of striking to the heart those whom we consider our oppressors. Ah, young lady, I speak feelingly—from woeful experience. All have their sorrows—I, too, have had mine. Listen to me, and lay my story to heart, and pray God that it may turn you from your sinful purpose.

"I was the father of five children once, four stout handsome lads, and one sweet pretty girl, the youngest and best beloved of the family. My poor wife died when Lucy was an infant in the cradle; and a sister of my own,—a stiff formal old maid, who had passed the better half of her life in tending upon sick middle-aged ladies,—came to take charge of my house and mind the children. She was a good sort of a body, but very precise and pragmatical, and no very great favourite with the young fry, who stood a deuced deal more in awe of Aunt Deb than of me.

"Most of the time I was away at sea, and during the war I earned good wages as pilot on a dangerous coast. As the boys grew up, they all followed in my track; the sea became, as it were, their natural element; they were excellent seamen, and when at home, we lived very happily together; but as that was a circumstance that rarely occurred in our calling, Lucy was left alone with Aunt Deb for months together.

"I don't think they agreed very well. The old one was very particular and positive, and Lucy was self-willed and passionate, and did not care much whether her aunt was pleased or angry. I never came home but Aunt Deb had some long story to tell, about Lucy's sauciness and want of respect to her; while Lucy, on the other hand, declared that Aunt Deb was a tyrant—a sour rigid presbyterian, who considered it a crime if she laughed, or appeared gay or cheerful; and then, as to sweethearts, Aunt Deb would not allow a decent-looking young fellow near the house.

"I, of course, laughed at such complaints. The petty differences between aunt and niece afforded me amusement, and I used jokingly to tell Deb, not to draw the reins too tight, or the young filly would run away from her in spite of curb or chain.

"But, as I said before, 'Man is born to trouble.' One by one, my brave sons were taken from me. Two fell in battle, two filled a watery grave, and Lucy alone remained to cheer my hearth, and welcome me on my return from my trips to London, or any of the neighbouring ports.

"She had her faults; but, in spite of them all, she was a warm-hearted affectionate creature, though prone to jealousy, and unreasonably given to fancy

herself neglected and ill-used, if she was not constantly petted and caressed, and allowed her own way.

"I loved her—ah, how I loved her! It was sinful to love a mere vision of flesh and blood as I loved her. The affection which had been divided between the five, was now concentrated wholly on her. I loved to dress her well, to see her look contented and happy. The idea of ever losing *her* never for one moment entered my mind.

"Aunt Deb told me that I was spoiling the child; that one day I would have cause to repent my folly. In moments of parental pride and happiness, who cares for the admonitions of a sour old maid? I had confidence in my pretty girl, and snapped my fingers at her prudish fears.

"Lucy had just completed her seventeenth year, when a dashing recruiting serjeant came to the town. It was a remote fishing place, and red coats were seldom seen in the old-fashioned quiet streets. This fellow's good looks and gay uniform turned the heads of all the young girls in the place, and poor Lucy's among the rest. She could talk of nothing but his fine carriage, his handsome face, and his beautiful dress.

"This, I must confess, greatly annoyed me. Sailors are proverbially hostile to their rivals in the trade of blood. I did not like the looks of the fellow, and I told Lucy that she need not set her heart upon Patrick Mahany, for that there were three objections against her marrying him, that I could never overcome.

"First, he was an Irishman.

"Secondly, he was a Papist.

"And, thirdly, he was a soldier, and I never could abide the colour of his coat.

"She remonstrated vehemently against what she considered my unjust prejudices, but I had Aunt Deb on my side, and I insisted upon her giving up all intercourse with the Sergeant, declaring in no measured terms, that if I caught him sneaking about my house I would shoot him with as little ceremony as I would a sea-gull. These threats led to her admitting her lover in private; and, unknown to her aunt and me, she had promised to become his wife the next trip I took to London.

"This fact was communicated to me by an old fisherman, who had overheard a conversation between them, while sitting under the shade of his boat, mending his nets upon the beach. My anger knew no bounds—it was cruel. I rushed home—I seized the poor trembling girl by the arm, and loaded her with reproaches. I accused her of deceiving me—of dishonouring herself and her family, by her infamous connexion with this man. In the tempest of my indignation I made use of expressions which have haunted my memory for years, which will continue to haunt me to my grave.

"She tried to defend herself—I would not listen to her; but, carrying her by force into her little chamber, I locked the door and strode down to the beach, to seek her paramour, whom I had seen sauntering on the sands a few minutes before, waiting, I had no doubt, for her.

"In all this I fancied I was doing my duty; that I was only endeavouring to save my beloved child from ruin. It was not long before I overtook Mahany, of whom I demanded satisfaction for the attempted seduction of my daughter.

"The serjeant stared at me in evident surprise, and told me, that the affair between him and Lucy

was at an end; that he was greatly attached to her, but she had that morning dismissed him for ever; as she said, that it was better they should part, than that she, by an act of disobedience, should break the heart of her dear old father.

"I was thunderstruck.

" 'I was the more willing to agree to this,' continued Mahany, 'as I found that no arguments of mine could induce her to change her religion. And I think, that man and wife can never be one in heart while they have a separate faith.'

"I turned away without answering him. There was a strange mysterious gnawing at my heart which nearly choked me—an overwhelming sense of having acted unjustly towards my poor girl that drove me mad. I was so anxious to ask her forgiveness, to make all the atonement that I could for my past conduct, that I ran up the steep cliff like a school-boy that flies from punishment. Yet, when I drew near the house, an involuntary shudder came over me, and I slackened my pace. I passed under her little window. I stopped and listened to hear her sob or moan; but all was still—dreadfully still.

"I found Aunt Deb braiding a fishing-net in the outer room. Her tranquillity reassured me, and made me almost laugh at my fears.

" 'Where is Lucy?' I asked in a low voice.

" 'In her room, I suppose,' she answered, indifferently.

" 'Have you seen her since I left?'

" 'No; I heard her crying passionately for a few minutes. You were too severe, Benjamin. But I hope it will do her good. You have to be resolute with Lucy if you expect to make her obey you.'

"It was listening to such advice as this that led to all the misery.

"Well, to make short of a sad story. I went to humble myself to my poor girl,—to tell her that her old father had done wrong, and had sought her on his knees to obtain pardon for his rash words. And—oh, misery!—I found her dead. Dead by her own hand! She had divided the jugular vein with my razor, and was lying at the foot of the bed, weltering in her blood. My reproaches had filled her soul with bitterness. She knew how fond I was of her; she knew that nothing on earth would grieve me so much as her death; and she destroyed herself, that she might be revenged on me."

"Do you not judge too harshly your unfortunate child?" said Marcella, wiping the tears from her eyes.

"A few lines, addressed to me in her own hand, will convince you that I am right."

The old man groaned, and taking a well-worn leathern pocket-book from his breast, searched over its contents, and then placed a slip of paper in Marcella's hand. The paper was old and mildewed, and had been originally the blank page torn from a book, upon which was traced, in a feeble, scrawling, unformed hand, in characters yellow and faint with age, and which had been frequently blotted with tears, the following sentence;—"Father, you will be sorry for your cruel words, when you find that they have caused the death of your child."

The old man was right in his conjectures. There could be no mistake as to the feelings which had prompted his daughter to commit suicide.

"And so she died," continued the seaman, wiping the big drops of perspiration from his brow; "died, in the prime of youth and beauty, in order to re-

venge upon her poor old father the affront he had offered to her pride. In the excess of my love for her, I had spoken ill-advisedly with my lips, in the hope of saving her from destruction; and in order to punish me, she made my heart bleed to its inmost core. There are some sorrows for which time has no healing balm; which distance only brings more terribly near. Such was my grief for her. When I think of her, I feel as if I had lived, and she had died, in vain; and a hot, suffocating grasp is on my throat, that dries up my tears. After Lucy's death, my home became hateful to me. I left the cottage, and what little property I had gathered together as a marriage portion for Lucy, to the care of Aunt Deb, and entered myself as a common seaman, in a vessel bound to a distant port, in order to forget the past. Years have fled away; you see me a lonely, childless, heart-broken man. Your mournful history recalled to my mind the agony I endured when I first discovered that my daughter was dead, and had died by the desperate act you premeditated; and I doubt not that you, like my unhappy Lucy, fancy that an unjust, tyrannical parent, is driving you on to the commission of this awful crime."

Marcella did not speak. She pressed the old sailor's hard, weather-beaten hand between her own, and looked up sadly and wistfully into his face.

"You are sorry for your fault, my young friend; I read it in your face; and now go home, like a good girl, and sin no more."

"To that home I cannot return, if I would banish from my mind the dark thoughts that led me here. The world is before me. I will seek in servitude the means of subsistence; but to remain with my mother and brother, is to ensure my own dishonour."

As she ceased speaking, the first red rays of the rising sun streamed along the waters. The storm had passed with the night, the waves still chafed and beat against the rocks, but the dawn gave the promise of a glorious day; and Marcella felt, that if she did not return to her mother's cottage, it was time for her to seek another home and shelter before night. Undetermined as to the course she must pursue, in order to obtain the desired object, she sauntered along the beach, by the side of the old man, wishing to ask his advice and assistance, and not knowing well how to begin, when she stumbled over something that obstructed her path, and, with a cry of horror, perceived that it was the body of a man that had been cast ashore from the wreck.

"Jesu Maria!" she cried, "whom have we here?"

"One of the poor fellows from the wreck," said Ben Waters; "it's wonderful how he escaped from the hungry jaws of the sharks. What, an' he be alive?"

"Impossible!" said Marcella, as her eyes rested more steadily on the pale face of the newly dead. "What a fine countenance! This surely must have been a gentleman. Is it not sad, that one so young and fair should be cut off in the very bloom of life?"

"You did not think so a few hours ago, when you contemplated your own death," returned honest Ben; "and truly you are as beautiful a piece of God's workmanship as ever my eyes held. But softly," he cried, kneeling beside the body, and raising the head upon his lap, while he slipped his hand within the wet garments that shrouded the breast. "He is not cold—the man is alive."

Taking a small case of brandy from his pocket, he poured a few drops into the young man's mouth, and commenced chafing his hands and breast vigorously.

After a few minutes, the stranger gave signs of returning life.

"He lives!" said Marcella, joyfully.

The young man heaved a deep sigh; and, after unclosing his eyes for a moment, sank back into a state so nearly resembling death, that Ben declared that he believed "that it was all over with him."

"He has got some injury, I fear, during his combat with the waves, against the jagged surface of the rocks. If there were a house near hand to which I could carry the body, timely aid might save him yet."

They were just opposite the entrance of the lane that led to Madame De Trueba's dwelling. Marcella remembered a free black who resided in a small cabin near the beach. She was a great favourite with old Paris, and at her request he would not fail to receive the body of the stranger. Telling Ben Waters to remain with him till her return, she went in quest of her sable friend, whom she was pretty certain to find at home at that early hour.

In an almost incredibly short time she was back, accompanied by a hale, powerful-looking negro, whose shining forehead and black woolly locks seemed to bid defiance to age and weakness.

"What Massa want?—Aha, dead man! Paris no like meddling wi' dead men. No luck, taking to one's cabin drowned man."

"He is not dead," said Waters. "Here, lend a hand, old boy. 'Tis but a slight lad—some widowed mother's pet, I fancy. They, like most women, cling to those that most need their care, and love the feeble and the sickly best. 'Tis a beautiful provision of Providence, that. You take the feet, I'll support his head and shoulders. We have him nicely now. Poor fellow! he's no great burthen, anyhow."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRANGER.

MARCELLA followed the old men and their insensible burthen to the negro's hut, where she helped to arrange his rude bed, which was composed of the coarsest materials; whilst the men proceeded to try and restore him to animation. In this they shortly succeeded; but the young man's mind was wandering, and he seemed perfectly unconscious of his situation, what had befallen him, or what was actually passing around him. Judging by his appearance, the fineness of his linen, and the whiteness of his hands, that he was a person of some means, and a gentleman, Ben Waters advised old Paris to take particular care of his guest, as it was by no means improbable that he would be well rewarded for his trouble. He then left the cabin, but not until he had extorted a promise from Marcella to stay and nurse the sick man, and to try and find out, as soon as possible, his name and circumstances, and if he had friends in Kingston, or on the island, as it would be necessary to inform these of his safety, directly he could be moved from his present asylum. And above all things, he adjured her to be reconciled to her mother, and to abandon for ever the rash project she had dared to form, and from which she had been rescued by an interposition of Divine Providence.

The story he had related of his daughter had made a deep impression on Marcella's mind, and she

did not hesitate to grant his request, thanking the old man, with tears, for the interest he had taken in her fate. The good old sailor then left her, to procure a few necessaries from the town for the use of the stranger; and Marcella took her station by his bed, to watch, with intense and evergrowing interest, the deep slumber into which he had fallen.

His countenance, if not handsome, was pleasing and intellectual; and the strong likeness he bore to one whose memory was very dear to her, filled her with surprise, and deepened the ardent desire she felt for his recovery. She carefully adjusted his pillows, and made everything in the little cabin as tidy as she could, and admitted a fresh current of air through the darkened lattices that shaded the windows. She begged the wife of old Paris to watch by the bedside of the patient, while she stepped across the lane to relate what had happened to her mother and brother.

She found Madame in a very ill humour at her long absence, and rating at Minerve that breakfast was not ready. Marcella hastened to remedy the evil; and while her mother was grumbling over the scantiness of her morning meal, Marcella informed her that she had been hired to attend upon a sick gentleman for a few days, who had promised to pay her very handsomely for her service. This piece of intelligence seemed to console Madame for her weak tea; and she consented to part with her for a week, provided that she returned every night to sleep in the house, and promised to give the larger half of her wages to her mother.

To these arrangements Marcella joyfully agreed; and, going to the town, she laid out a couple of dollars, which she had borrowed of Minerve (to

whom she confided the real state of the case) in purchasing medicine and necessaries for her patient.

The generous negress not only gave, with hearty good will, her little all, to assist the benevolent purpose of her dear young mistress, but assured her that she might rely upon her active cooperation in nursing the poor young man, if her aid was required.

The person who had thus unconsciously succeeded in turning the desponding thoughts of the quadroon girl into a more healthful channel, was no other than young Ingate, the nephew of old Joshua Baynes, and the intended husband of Miss Betsey.

Harsh and worldly as the old planter was to others, he possessed strong natural affections, and was firmly attached to his own family and kindred, especially to his sisters, the Mrs. Ingate whom we have already mentioned, and the mother of Henry, who bore the same name, the ladies having married two brothers.

Mrs. Edward Ingate, who adopted Marcella De Trueba, accompanied her husband and brother to Jamaica. Both these gentlemen succeeded in realizing a fortune; but her husband died young, from the effects of the climate, leaving her a widow with two sons. These she subsequently lost, and brought up Marcella to relieve the loneliness of her desolate home. At her death, her property devolved to her nephew Henry, her youngest sister's only son.

This lady was likewise a widow; and, though a shrewd, worldly-minded woman, was a most devoted mother to a very fragile and ailing child. Her maternal care and attention was returned by her sickly boy with the most ardent affection. Her wishes had ever been a law to him, and the implicit obedience he

had rendered from a child to her commands, had not diminished in force since his arrival at manhood.

Henry Ingate, by his aunt's will, possessed enough of this world's goods to have satisfied the hopes of the most avaricious parent. But Mrs. Ingate's love for money was only secondary to her maternal affection. She thought it a great pity that any of her brother Joshua's property should go out of the family, when a judicious marriage between her son and his daughter would secure it in their own branch.

How many matrimonial speculations of this sort, entered into by the old and avaricious, have proved total failures!

The chain that binds together young and impassioned hearts is seldom made of gold; and the aged have still to learn, that Love never suffers spectacled eyes to choose for him the dear object of his hopes and vows. While Mrs. Ingate was pondering in her heart how to bring about this golden union, her brother, to her infinite delight, wrote to her upon the very subject that lay so much on her mind; proposing a match between the cousins, and urging Hannah to lose no time in forwarding the young bridegroom across seas to his expectant bride.

Nothing was now wanting to the desired union but the consent of the parties, who ought to have been the most interested in the matter.

Henry had just finished his studies at college. He listened to his mother's proposals with an amused and passive indifference. He had never been in love, and consequently knew nothing of the nature of the passion, but what he had learned from books, and which he believed to be greatly exaggerated. He concluded that it was his duty to yield to his mother's earnest entreaties, and never for a moment indulged

the idea, that his own feelings, upon a closer intimacy with the prescribed object of his affections, might rebel against her authority,—that it was possible for him to love and choose a wife for himself,—that love, indeed, was an involuntary emotion, neither subject to his own control nor the control of others.

Retired and studious in his habits, he had mingled very little in female society. He had mused over the poet's dreams of love, and had been the faithful confidant of many an amorous fellow-student's passion, but had never yielded up his heart and reason to the indulgence of what he considered in the light of an unpardonable weakness. Then he had some odd notions, that young and inexperienced lads are apt to entertain, "That one woman is as good as another; that marriage is all a lottery, and that it is impossible to judge of the character of any girl before she becomes a wife, as her object is to deceive and entrap men into matrimony."

His cousin Betsey, he had heard from his aunt, was a good girl, a pretty girl, and from her domestic habits was very likely to make an excellent wife. She was rich too,—he saw no particular objections to that. His mother said, "that Betsey was just the woman to make him happy," and he always believed what his mother said; and being fully persuaded of this important fact, he bade that dear mother farewell, and sailed in the *Maria* for the golden islands of the West, to woo and wed his promised bride.

The time had arrived that was to prove the truth of his creed, and reduce his cool calculating theory to practice; and we shall see how soon he abandoned all his preconceived opinions, and became an enthusiastic convert to a new system.

He had received no further injury from his collision with the rocks than sundry ugly bruises; but these, together with the excitement produced by the dangers of his situation during that terrible storm, brought on a fever, which confined him for upwards of a week to his bed.

For several days he took no notice of the beautiful creature who hovered around his sick couch, like a ministering angel, listening with gentle patience to his complaints, and soothing with her soft silvery accents the restlessness of pain.

He knew that he had been wrecked. The cries of his fellow-sufferers in their death struggle with the ferocious waves haunted and heightened the delirium of fever. He remembered his own desperate conflict with the loud-voiced bellowing surges that had swallowed his companions, up to the appalling moment when the battle for life ceased, and he passed into the forgetfulness of death.

He was again conscious of existence, and knew that he was an inhabitant of this world; but where he was, and how and by whom rescued from that watery abyss, was still a mystery that he could not solve, and he had not strength to demand an explanation from those who ministered around his rude bed.

After the noise and hurry of the storm, and all the agonizing efforts for self-preservation, the desperate physical and mental struggles which preceded the annihilation of hope,—the deep quiet of that little cabin, after the violence of the fever subsided, was so refreshing to his mind and body, that he nestled down in the pillows, as a sick infant does into its mother's breast, and shrunk from making inquiries which might disturb the enjoyment of his dream of rest.

From this state of pleasing helplessness he was roused one afternoon by the soft low voice of his young nurse, who, after the usual inquiries about his health, and whether he was easier, or still suffering, asked him earnestly to tell her his name, and if he had friends in Jamaica.

The fever had left him, and Henry was now wide awake. Yet he did not immediately answer the fair querist, but lay upon his pillow, with his eyes fixed upon her beautiful face, with an expression of admiration and wonder. "Was she an angel, or a woman? how came she there? What strange combination of circumstances had brought such a vision of beauty to cheer his sick bed? and how could one so young and lovely confine herself to that close chamber, when the world lay bright and glowing without?"

"My name," he said slowly, and without withdrawing his eyes from her face, lest it should vanish, and leave him doubly alone, "is Henry Ingate. I have an uncle here, one Joshua Baynes, a merchant and planter."

"I know him," said Marcella, and her heart died within her. "He is one of the richest men in the island."

"Does he live far from this place?"

"About two miles, or so. I heard that he expected his nephew out this summer. I presume, sir, that you are he."

"You have made a right guess," said the invalid, with a smile. "And his daughter,—is she a nice girl?"

"Yes; she is kind and amiable."

"And pretty?"

"They say so;" and Marcella's pale cheek grew paler still.





"You have not seen her, then?"

"Yes, often. When children we were friends and playmates; but times have altered since then. Miss Baynes is a rich heiress, and Marcella De Trueba is a poor girl, forced to work for her living."

"Marcella De Trueba? I surely know that name. Are not you the young lady whom my aunt Edward adopted as her child?"

"The same."

"Ah! I know you now," cried the young man. "I ought to have recognised you before, from my aunt's description of you. Her letters were full of praises of her dear child. How happy I am that we have become acquainted with each other, although in a manner so strange and unexpected!"

"Strange indeed," thought Marcella. "Yes, this is Henry Ingate, of whom my dear benefactress was so fond, of whom she used to speak with such pride; and he is destined for the husband of Joshua Baynes's pretty, senseless daughter:" and for the first time in her life, Signora De Trueba thought the young creole, who was considered the belle of Kingston, a vulgar matter-of-fact doll-eyed girl, quite unworthy of being the bride of the handsome young Englishman.

She was still revolving all this in her mind, when Henry again addressed her.

"I thought my aunt had left Miss De Trueba above the necessity of earning her own living."

"Such, doubtless, was her intention. But death came so suddenly upon her, that she was unable to fulfil her promise. God bless her! She was the best, the dearest friend I ever had. Her memory is more precious to me than wealth. I forget that

I am poor and dependent when I recal the happy years I passed under her roof."

Henry Ingate felt his heart leap for joy when he knew that it was in his power to fulfil his aunt's wishes. He then eagerly inquired of his gentle nurse all the particulars of the wreck, and how he had been so fortunate to escape death, when the rest of the crew had found a watery grave.

Marcella not only satisfied his curiosity on these points, but before she left the cabin that evening, she had confided to him the trials and sorrows of her life's brief span.

Henry Ingate, who had become desperately in love with his beautiful nurse, and who began to wish Betsey Baynes at Jericho, listened to her story with the greatest indignation. How he longed to take her from such a home! To bid the dear preserver of his life live for him. But here that horrid Betsey Baynes stole in upon his day dreams, and marred all his vision of happiness. How could he disobey his mother, and by this one rash act overthrow the cherished hope of years? To many, the displeasure of a mother would have offered a very slight barrier to their wishes, but to him it presented an almost insurmountable obstacle.

He did not love his cousin. How should he? they were as yet strangers to each other; but he began to suspect that he did love, and passionately, too, the sweet girl before him; and before he was able to leave his bed, he only appeared happy while in her presence.

The first day he was able to sit up, and after Marcella had arranged and brushed over her fingers the glossy ringlets of fair hair that clustered round his white temples, and had administered his medicine

and basin of arrowroot, and covered the little table on which he leant with clusters of ripe fruit and fragrant flowers, she sat down beside him, and taking his wasted hand in hers, said, in a very gentle but earnest manner,

"Dear Henry, let me go to your uncle and inform him that you live. You are now able to be removed to his house without any danger of a relapse."

"Are you in such a desperate hurry to get rid of me, Marcel," said her lover, carrying the small hand to his lips.

"You know better than that, Henry. But our little stock of money is exhausted, and you cannot regain health and strength without proper food and nourishment."

"The hour that informs him of my existence, will separate us perhaps for ever," said Henry, sorrowfully. "You do not know, my sweet Marcel, what brought me to Jamaica?"

"Marcella knew too well."

"If he learns that I am alive, he will consider me bound in honour to marry his daughter. This I cannot do. My heart is yours, Marcel; I can no longer live without you. Let him, therefore, remain in ignorance, while we continue happy in each other's love."

"But, Henry, this blessed, this delicious dream of a purer and better existence, cannot last; before another week expires, I have pledged myself to marry Mr. Abbot; and without I can show my mother some return for my attendance upon you, I shall no longer be suffered to repeat my visits here."

"Is it not provoking," said the young man, "that though I possess thousands, at this moment I cannot

command a shilling without applying to my uncle? But take this ring, Marcel, and pawn it at some jeweller's in Kingston. It is a fine gem, and you ought to raise enough upon it to satisfy your mother's avarice. Go, my beloved, and as long as the money lasts, do not mention such a cruel word as separation. Something may yet turn up to save us from despair."

Marcella was only too willing to grant his request; she took the ring, as we have before stated, to Benjamin Levi, and my readers know in what manner she succeeded in her errand.

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CHAPTER XIV.

IN WHICH THE HERO PERFORMS THE MIRACLE OF TURNING THE
BLACK-A-MOOR WHITE.

THE morning after Richard Redpath's adventure with Miss Betsey in the garden, was ushered in by clouds and gloom. Mr. Baynes had risen with sundry disagreeable twinges of the gout in his great toe. The coffee was flat; the hot rolls not buttered to his taste; and he vented his spleen upon Sambo, without sparing either his person or his feelings.

It was the first licking Master Richard had ever received, and he did not at all relish the unexpected taste of the cow-skin. His back smarted, the planter stormed, Miss Betsey cried, and the rest of that most miserable day was spent in trying to rectify the mistakes of the morning.

Miss Betsey felt for Sambo's back as if it had been her own; and while her worthy papa was taking his afternoon's nap, she sought the indignant slave, and tried by her gentle, sympathising voice, to pour oil and wine into his wounds.

Now, it must be confessed, that Master Sambo felt rather sulky, and for some time listened to her condoling speeches with a very bad grace. He did not at all approve of the *practical* part of slavery, and was determined to be quit of it as soon as he conveniently could.

While he lay groaning and writhing upon his mat, wishing old Baynes and the black overseer, who had administered the flogging, in a very hot place,

a scheme had popped into his fertile brain, which he thought could be safely and easily carried into effect, which would not only restore him to liberty, but secure the friendship of the planter and the hand of his pretty mistress.

The present opportunity was not to be lost, and, satisfied that he had touched her feelings, even under the hideous disguise he had assumed, he determined boldly to throw off the mask, and declare, "Richard himself again."

"Betsey!" cried he, as she leant over the mat upon which he lay, stiff and sore from his late flagellation, "dear Betsey, you love me!"

Betsey was taken by surprise. His audacity astonished her; she started back, and a deep blush heightened the glow on her cheeks, and she could only find words enough to stammer out her usual pretty oath—"Gracious me!"

"Nay, pretty one, don't attempt to deny the fact. I read it in your eyes—in the roses on your cheek—in the amiable confusion of your manner. Now, don't go to strike me, my charming young mistress, goodness knows, I am sore enough already."

"Sambo, are you mad?" said Miss Betsey, trying her best to be angry. "Do you know that if I were to inform papa of your impudent conduct, he would flay you alive?"

"But you will not tell him."

"I vow I will. You bad, saucy fellow! How dare you insult a lady by supposing it possible for her to love a black—a nasty, dirty black? Papa says that a nigger is not so good as a monkey. That the monkey is the most rational animal of the two. Love a black, indeed!" And she stamped her little foot with an air of tragic disdain, and tossed her little

head back towards her shoulders, till the rich glossy curls that surrounded it nearly touched her waist.

"Hark you, Mistress Betsey; did you ever hear, among all your nursery tales, the impossibility of washing the black-a-moor white?"

"Yes, and believe it too."

"I can teach you to perform that miracle."

Betsey opened her black eyes very wide.

"Are you certain that I am a negro?"

"Papa says you are."

"Supposing papa bought an orange in mistake for a lemon; would that fact change the nature of the two fruit? Look at me, Betsey—nay, don't laugh—am I like an African?"

"Not very,—I always said so."

"Do I speak like one?"

"Not now. But you used to do. My! I begin to suspect that there is something wrong about you. That you are—"

"The devil, perhaps," said Richard, laughing.

"It looks very like it."

"Nay, lovely Betsey; I am neither monkey, nigger, nor devil, but an unfortunate young fellow who is dying for love of you. A slave, I acknowledge myself to be. Love's voluntary slave. See how easily the sly little god can turn black into white, and make a man forswear his country and his skin. Can that arm belong to a nigger?" Stripping up the sleeve of his checked shirt, he displayed to the gaze of the astonished girl an arm as white as snow.

"A white man, I declare!"

"Forgive the cheat, dearest girl," said Richard, sinking at her feet; "to obtain your love I assumed this disguise. In me behold the husband your father chose for you. Your cousin, Henry Ingate, whom

you both lament as drowned. As good luck would have it, I, and two friends, brothers, of the name of Redpath, escaped from the wreck. A strange whim possessed me, that I would visit incognito my promised bride, but how this was to be brought about I could not tell. Richard Redpath, the younger of the brothers, a gay, dashing, good-natured fellow, advised me to turn black. Robert pretended that he was my master, and put me up to sale. Your father purchased me; and here I am. What think you of your future spouse, my sweet coy?"

"I will tell you when you have washed your face," cried Betsey, with tears of joy gleaming in her eyes. "My! it would have been dreadful—would it not? to have loved a black?"

"Shocking," said Richard, with a sly meaning look.

"I always suspected that you were not a nigger. Your hair curls close to your head, but it is not wool. Your nose is straight, not flat. Your mouth; well, that's not very small, but 'tis very red, and your teeth are like ivory."

"And my leg and foot," said Richard, advancing his well-turned limb and its finely formed extremity; "I hope you did not overlook them among my other perfections, for I do flatter myself that when Nature formed me, she did not do it exactly after the negro pattern."

"Hold your tongue, you saucy fellow; who would have thought that I had such an ugly black slave for a cousin," said Betsy, shaking him merrily by the hand. "Go and wash yourself, and let me show you to my father, and tell him all about it: won't he be glad?"

"Not before you seal my freedom with a kiss."

"I'm afraid," said Betsey.

"Of turning black."

"I suppose, if I refuse you, it will make you look blue," said Betsey, as she blushing submitted to Richard's impetuous embrace.

"I may take this kiss as an earnest that you will be my wife?"

"Of course; but if you have any doubts upon the subject, Cousin Henry, you had better take another to seal the bargain."

"With all my heart. Oh, Betsey, you are a bewitching little flirt. And now what am I to do for a decent suit of clothes? I should be sorry to present myself to my father-in-law in these."

"I can supply you. I have a fine suit of black, that belonged to my dear uncle, Ingate, in my press up-stairs. He was quite a young man when he died. They will just fit you."

"Capital! and hark you, dear Bess; don't say a word to the old gentleman about the cheat I put upon him. Sambo must absquatulate, and we must sink the black altogether."

"Yes, it will be as well. Papa has such prejudices." And Betsey ran off to fetch the clothes, and Richard fell back upon the mat, and laughed and rolled to and fro, in an ecstasy of mirth. "Well, if no liar can enter the kingdom of heaven, its very certain that I must be on the high road to the other place. The devil himself must have whispered this scheme into my ear, and how easily the little girl swallowed the bait. I am not very fond of stepping into dead men's shoes; but as poor Hal is by this time food for the fishes, it cannot do him any harm borrowing his name to secure a fine fortune and a pretty wife. I'm sure he would forgive it: at all events, I am into the scrape, and it is no use drawing

back; I must trust to impudence and good luck to carry out the joke."

In a few minutes Betsey returned with the clothes she had promised, and showing Richard into a spare chamber, reserved for the use of guests, that had the luxury of a bath attached to it, she bade him be quick in changing himself into a white man, as she was dying with impatience to introduce him to her father.

While Richard was making his toilet, away flew his betrothed, and bouncing into the parlour, ran up to the easy chair in which the planter was reposing, and filling the vacant room with sounds of the most unmusical description, she woke him with a kiss.

"How now, Betsey, what's the matter?" cried the old man, rubbing his eyes. "There's not been another shock of an earthquake; has there?"

"Oh no, papa; but something almost as surprising has happened?"

"Ha! what is it?"

"My cousin Henry is not drowned—but is alive and in the house."

"God bless me! Is it possible—Henry alive? Why, my girl, this is good news. Why, Bess! I dreamed only now, that I saw him ate up by a monstrous shark, whose head and face bore a strange resemblance to Benjamin Levi."

"He must have been a queer master, papa; worse than the Yankee half horse, half alligator. But see, papa, here is my cousin himself."

With an air of easy assurance, which was quite natural to him, Richard returned the old man's warm and eager greeting, though he would much rather have repaid a certain smarting of the back in the same coin.

Having been on the most intimate terms with young Ingate during the voyage, he was able to

answer all the old man's interrogatories with tolerable accuracy ; while the planter, on his part, found out the most wonderful likeness in the athletic handsome young man, not only to his daughter, but to himself.

" Why, Hannah wrote me word, Neffee, that you were a sickly delicate chap. That I must warn against exposing himself to the dangers of the climate. By Jove! you are a Hercules—A Hercules, Sir! who might bid defiance to all the climates in the world."

" My mother is not a little proud of my gigantic proportions, and wished to take you by surprise. My father, I've been told, was a tall man."

" Yes, sir ; but your mother was short. All the Baynes family were short, and you resemble our side of the house. Clever people, Neffee, very clever people."

" So I should infer from the specimen before me, uncle. It is to be hoped that my height won't interfere with the quality of the family brains, or I should wish to creep into a nutshell, or diminish myself into a pigmy."

The old planter, in spite of his predisposition in favour of small men, was not in the humour to quarrel with Richard's lofty stature. He thought that nature might have made an exception in his case, and, for the honour of the family, suffered a tall man for once to be clever. So he took him instantly into favour, and it was astonishing how rapidly the young man improved in his uncle's good opinion, how agreeable he became in the eyes of his pretty daughter. Was it kindred sympathy that drew them so closely together? It appeared to the old man that they had known Richard for years.

" That's right—that's right!" cried he, whenever

he saw the young people particularly taken up with each other. "That's just what it ought to be. I knew you would take to each other. When shall the wedding take place?"

"As soon as you please," returned the amorous Richard; "were it to-morrow the time would appear long to me."

"That's rather too soon," said the planter, rubbing his hands; "it shall take place on the twenty-first of August."

"On my birthday! Oh, papa! that will be delightful. And you must not forget a birthday present."

"On the contrary, Bess, I shall give you away to a good husband."

"Who will consider you the best present he ever received in his life," said Richard, kissing her hand.

"That has yet to be proved," said Miss Betsey; "a treasure easily obtained is not often highly prized."

"Ah, you little provoking witch!" whispered Richard, "if you only knew half the trouble you have cost me."

"Hush!" said Betsey, laying her dimpled hand on his mouth, "we will talk over that by-and-by."

"Your cousin looks fatigued, Betsey. Ring the bell, and tell Sambo to bring up the dinner."

"Sambo is gone," said Betsey, gravely.

"Gone—where the devil is he gone?"

"I don't know; he has been missing ever since you had him flogged."

"The fellow cannot have run away?"

"It looks very like it."

"What! for a flogging—a mere flogging? Nonsense! the fellow would not be such a fool. All niggers are used to that," cried the angry planter.

"On the sell system, I suppose," said Richard, "because they can't help it."

"Ah, I see, you are stuffed full of European prejudices, Henry. A few months in Jamaica will cure you of that."

Here a colloquy, that might have ended in a stormy discussion on the merits and demerits of slavery, was interrupted by a servant announcing,

"Mr. Benjamin Levi!"

There was no person on the island whom Joshua Baynes held in such detestation as the editor, in spite of their professing the same party creed. He abhorred the man, and was too powerful to heed his malice, or to cringe to him for his good word. He greeted the Jew with a formal bow, and a "How do ye do, Mr. What-do-you-call-'em?"

Benjamin cast a furtive glance round the handsomely furnished apartment, and his eyes encountered the saucy, merry gaze of Richard Redpath, who could scarcely retain his gravity, while he underwent the strict examination of the Editor. He felt very much inclined to say to him, "Well, old fellow, are you satisfied? Do you think you will know me again?"

Benjamin was so much struck with his likeness to his visitor of the morning, that he took them for one and the same person.

"I think, sir," he said, "that we have met before?"

"I think not," returned Richard. "I am sure your face once seen could never be forgotten."

"If I'm not very much mistaken, you bought a suit of clothes of me this morning?"

"You *are* mistaken, old gentleman. Wipe your specs, and look at me again. I have but the suit I now wear, which I hardly think would suit a person of your dimensions."

"I was wrong," muttered the Jew; "but the likeness is wonderful."

"And now, sir, that you seem to have decided that question," said Mr. Baynes, "I would thank you to inform me, what circumstance has led to the honour of a visit from you to-day?"

"I came as a friend, Mr. Baynes."

("That's something unusual," said the Planter, in an aside, which he meant to be heard.)

"Your nephew, Mr. Ingate, who was reported to have been drowned in the *Maria*, is now living in the neighbourhood of Kingston. He is very sick, and has fallen into the hands of people of very doubtful character; and I advise you, as a friend and very near relative of the young man, to lose no time in looking into the matter."

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Levi, for the trouble you have put yourself to on my account," said the planter, rather ironically. "Let me have the pleasure of introducing you to my nephew, Mr. Henry Ingate; who, instead of being sick, is in perfect health, and in the company of those, whose character, I flatter myself, is without stain. And now, Mr. Levi, let me advise you not to meddle so much with other people's affairs, but to learn to mind your own business. Cato," added he, ringing the bell for the black servant, "show Mr. Levi to the door."

"Confound the old fool!" shouted Benjamin, the moment he found himself once more in the street. "May the curse of Pharaoh light upon him! There is some mystery here. I'll sift the matter to the bottom, and expose the whole affair in the paper to-morrow."

CHAPTER XV.

THE YOUNG WIDOW.

"How! Mr. Redpath, is this you?" cried Mr. Lawson, rising from his desk, and shaking Robert heartily by the hand. "Upon my word! I should not know you for the same man who spoke to me in this store two hours ago. The Jew has wrought a miracle in your favour, and made a gentleman of you at once."

"I hope that it is not to him that I am indebted for my pretensions to that name. Mr. Benjamin Levi would make a bad model for that much-abused character, which is claimed by so many, and deserved by so few."

"And what did you think of our little Editor?"

"He is a strange, perverse animal. The less said of him the better."

"Yes; it's the wisest course to leave the hog to wallow in his own mire. You cannot go near him without being spattered with dirt. But what of your own affairs, young gentleman? I have been thinking the matter over ever since you left me. Have you any objection to serve a lady, young, pretty, and her own mistress?"

"Not in the least."

"I have a niece," continued the merchant; "a smart, clever woman, who keeps the large store at the end of the street. Poor girl! She had the misfortune to lose her husband last year with the

fever. He had a capital business, and they were getting ahead of the world, when he was suddenly carried off. Lucinda would have given up the concern and retired into the country, where she has a small farm, but I advised her to continue the business for the sake of the children—for she has two very small children, a boy and a girl. She has succeeded beyond my expectations; and I have little doubt but that she will realize a fortune. Her man of business died last week, and she wants a good salesman in his place. You say that you are an excellent accomptant, well versed in mercantile affairs. If you preferred book-keeping, the person who at present fills that situation would exchange with you, as he is sickly, and stooping so much over the desk injures his health. Your salary would be larger, and you would have the advantage of boarding with the family."

"I should certainly prefer the counting-house," said Robert. "I have an insuperable dislike to see a tall man measuring off yards of linen and tape. I shall be contented with a moderate salary, until the lady has tested my abilities. My present object is to obtain a home."

"Then let us step across the street, and negotiate matters with the widow. I think you are just the lad to suit her."

Robert hoped that the old gentleman might prove a true prophet.

Lucinda Westfall (for, like the Americans, the West Indian ladies luxuriate in fine names) was in the very act of shaking and scolding a handsome, curly-headed, mischievous imp of a boy, in a linen tunic and trowsers, who, even at that tender age, dared to resist her authority, and tell her point blank,

"That he would be his own master," when the black servant ushered into the drawing-room, "Mr. Lawson and another gentleman."

"Oh, uncle! I'm so glad you are here," cried the pretty young creature, turning her face flushed with excitement towards her visitors. "You will set this young gentleman to rights for me. He has been such a naughty, wicked boy! He deserves a good sound flogging, indeed he does."

"Then why, my dear, don't you give it to him. It is a pity the poor child should not meet with his deserts."

"Ah, uncle, would you really wish me to whip the dear boy, and he so like his father? No, no, no! he may behave as he likes; but I never can strike Frederic's child."

"That's always the way with you, Lucinda; spare the rod and spoil the child."

"Don't quote Solomon to me, uncle. He was a hateful creature, and had too many wives and children to care for any of them. I think Bathsheba must have neglected the rod in his case, and he spoke feelingly."

"Well, Master Leonard, and what have you been up to that has made mamma so angry?" said the merchant, dropping into an easy chair, and drawing the spoilt child between his knees.

"Oh, uncle, I did not mean to vex mamma; but it was so funny." And the child shook his curls, and laughed obstreperously.

"Funny enough," said Mrs. Westfall, echoing her blue-eyed darling's mirth. "But, then, 'tis so provoking. My sister-in-law, Mrs. Wood, has been staying with me this week, and only left this morning. You know, uncle, how affected and huffy she

is—how difficult it is to keep the peace with her; she is so vain of herself, and always fancying slights from all her friends. I suspected long ago that her fine complexion was not real, and I found out that she paints. Yes, uncle, uses both white and red.”

“She borrows from Art to cheat Nature,” said the merchant; “that’s rather reversing the order of things. But to the point: what has her painting to do with Leonard’s ill-conduct?”

“Everything. His aunt was very fond of having him and Elmira about her. She has no children of her own, you know, and she never suspected that these little creatures take notice of everything. Nothing escapes their restless curious eyes, and she did not hesitate to paint her face before them. Unluckily, this morning, she left her dressing-case unlocked, and Master Leonard stole his aunt’s rouge and jewel powder, and painted old Mr. Baynes’s monkey, that every day comes into our kitchen to see what he can steal.”

“Ha! ha! ha!” shouted the culprit.

“Ha! ha! ha!” long and loudly laughed the merchant. “Is that all the fault the boy has been guilty of? I see no great crime in that.”

“No crime!” said Mrs. Westfall, holding up her pretty white hands in astonishment. “Mrs. Wood thought it one, at any rate, for she stormed for an hour; and declared that I encouraged my brat to turn her into ridicule; that she never would set her foot across my threshold again; that she never would forgive me for the outrage that had been perpetrated against her. She refused to listen to my plea of utter ignorance. In vain I told her that I never suspected her of using false colours; that I was as much surprised to see her painted, as I was to find

the monkey daubed with rouge and white lead. This increased her anger to tempest heat, and she ordered her carriage about half-an-hour ago, and went off without bidding me or the children good-bye. Is it not dreadful? But, uncle, this is not the worst of the business. The little scamp ran off before we could catch him to wash the paint off his face; and that ill-natured old maid, Amy Baynes, will set it all over the town to-morrow that I paint. I, who was born in England, where the women are rosy by nature, and have no occasion to buy a good complexion. Is it not vexatious?"

"Dear mamma," chimed in Master Leonard, "I did not mean to offend Aunt Ellen; I only meant to make Mr. Pug look pretty."

"Well, well, my little man, your mamma will forgive you this time. But, hark you, Leonard, never attempt to paint monkeys again, or the old maids in the town will make mince-meat of you."

While this important matter was being discussed, Robert had leisure to examine the countenance of his future mistress. She was about his own age. Little, sprightly, blue-eyed, fair-complexioned, with auburn hair of a tinge so glowing, that it almost approximated to red, but wonderfully heightened the animation of the pretty Anglo-Saxon face it shaded, and the brilliancy of its colouring. Contrasted with the dark skins of the natives, from the jet black, through all the intermediate tints of brown, olive, yellow, copper-coloured, and dirty white, Lucinda Westfall's pure red and white was delightful to the eye, and vividly recalled to Robert's mind the fair smiling faces he had left behind in dear old England.

After a long private conversation with his niece in a distant window, Mr. Lawson introduced Robert,

and said that Mrs. Westfall was willing to take him on trial for a month. If she found that he then suited her, she would give him a salary of one hundred and fifty pounds, and board him in the family. To these liberal terms Robert cheerfully assented, and promised to commence his new duties on the morrow.

"That's a nice, sensible woman," said Mr. Lawson, as they left the house: "it's a pity that she spoils those children; and if you wish to keep friends with her, Mr. Redpath, you must make up your mind to spoil them too."

"She's a very pretty woman," said Robert, who was only thinking of the mother.

"Yes; well enough. But those children; I would not be pestered with those children for a thousand a-year."

Robert thought that he could bear the inconvenience for half that sum; although he was naturally irritable, and not over-fond of the juveniles.

"Who have we here?" cried the merchant; "the Jew, I declare. See, that curly-headed, black-eyed, little scamp in the gutter, is taking him off to his face. Ha! ha! ha! Look at the imp, Mr. Redpath; does he not imitate his waddle and pompous airs to the life?"

The small individual alluded to, was standing astride of the kennel, in which he had been dabbling with sundry ducks and geese, as dirty, and as much delighted with disturbing the muddy pool as his companions. As soon as he saw Benjamin Levi approach, he puffed out his cheeks, and contrived to distend his body to double the size, shouting as he did so—

"I took a piece of pork,
And stuck it on a fork,
For the old Jew's dinner."

"That's what I call retributive justice," said the merchant; "Levi barks and snaps at everybody, and they are afraid to bark and snap again; but the boys of the town, who have no terror of the thunders wielded by this blustering lord of the press, pay him back in his own coin; and see how sensitive he is of abuse, even from a pigmy like that!"

"Go home, you little scoundrel!" cried Levi, shaking his cane at the imp.

"Go home, you little scoundrel!" reiterated the boy, shaking his fist at the Jew.

"If I catch you, you young villain! I'll strip the skin over your ears," shouted Levi, making an attempt to run, which proving a failure, he was forced to stop suddenly to draw breath.

The boy saw that he had the best of it, and ran laughing away.

"You young scamp!" muttered the Editor, "I'll make your father pay for this."

"That's visiting the sins of the son upon the parent," said Lawson; "but I have little doubt but that the father has been abused in Benjamin's paper, and the boy is taking the law of retaliation into his own hands."

That day Robert dined with Mr. Lawson, into whose favour he was making rapid progress. Whilst the old gentleman was indulging in his afternoon's nap, Robert strolled into the town, in the hope of meeting Richard, and imparting to him his good fortune.

For some time he paced to and fro in front of Mr. Baynes's splendid mansion, anxiously watching the countenance of every slave who passed in and out, through the iron gates that led to the offices at the back of the house. At length his ears were

saluted by a gay ringing laugh. His heart leaped at the sound. It was the well-known voice of his brother, who, in the company of his intended bride, just then entered the balcony which fronted the sea.

Was it a dream? Could that handsome, fashionably-dressed man, be the identical Richard? the despised black slave, whom he had sold a few days previously into the house of bondage. He rubbed his eyes and looked again. Yes, it was Richard, and no mistake.

He, too, was recognised, and the next moment his brother joined him on the beach.

"My dear Richard!"

"Hush! I go by a new name now. Speak lower, or my pretty mistress will hear you. I have rebaptized myself with my change of colour, and have adopted the sentimental cognomen of Henry."

"If it is Henry Ingate whom you personate," said Robert; "I fear I shall damp all your matrimonial speculations when I tell you that Henry Ingate is alive."

"The devil he is!" said Richard, laughing. "Then that queer old fox, Benjamin Levi, was right. Well, I am heartily glad of it. Henry was a good, honest fellow, too good to be food for sharks. Let him come; I have the whip-hand of him. He may keep the gold, I have the heart of his mistress."

"You are a lucky dog, Richard. What art did you employ to secure success?"

"Oh, the natural language, to be sure. It's the most powerful language in the world. Few women can resist it between the ages of fourteen and four-and-twenty. The heart claims its own then in defiance of the world. But let the world once gain the ascendancy, and Love may whistle his best tune

to the winds. But, methinks, a few days have wrought a wonderful change, Robert, in your outward man. Come, tell me what you have been doing for yourself."

"Fortune has stood my friend, Richard. A portion of your good luck, for once, seems to have visited me. My adventures are almost as wonderful as your own."

He then gave a minute account of all that had befallen him since they parted in the slave-market. Richard was highly amused with his interview with Levi.

"I should like to have that fellow tossed in a blanket," said he. "It would be rare sport to see him flying, like a plucked goose, between earth and heaven. He is such a woolpack, that if he got a fall it would scarcely break his bones."

"I never can laugh at such people. But you have not told me, Richard, how you obtained your freedom, and contrived to wash the black-a-moor white."

"You see, I have not found it labour in vain." And here he gave a ludicrous account of his adventures, which made his grave brother laugh in spite of himself.

"Richard is a fortunate fellow," said Robert, as he took his way back to the merchant's house. "Though we were born of the same parents, a different star must have presided at his birth."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONSPIRACY.

IN a back parlour in the Ship tavern two men were seated at a table, smoking and drinking. The place was redolent of the smell of brandy and cigars, and so full of smoke, that curled upwards in blue clouds from the moustached lips of the smokers, that it was impossible to see across the room. It was not until the shorter and stouter man of the twain flung the remains of the fragrant weed upon the floor, which cleared a little the thick atmosphere, that you could distinguish the parties, or speak of their identity.

The taller and slighter man was Antonio De Trueba, whose handsome face was clouded with a gloomy and desperate expression, very foreign to the gay, reckless air he generally wore. He still continued to puff volumes of smoke from his lips, while his hand beat a tremulous tattoo upon the table.

His companion was a singular and striking-looking person. His complexion, tanned to a warm brown, was of that peculiar tint, that bespoke a Celtic origin. Short curling yellow hair clustered in picturesque confusion round his broad massy head. His eyes, well placed under his capacious brows, were rather small, but of a piercing and intense lustre, and of that deep blue tint, that when roused to anger, or alive with action and energy, appeared jet black,—the eye of the lion with the glance of the

eagle. A glorious eye, through which the spirit of command flashed,—which asked obedience, and that would be obeyed. He wore the beard as well as the moustache, which in hue was of a decided red, and added not a little to the determined air of the stranger, and set off the full but handsomely formed mouth, and the even dazzling white teeth, whose humorous and good-natured expression, whenever their owner relaxed his muscles into a smile, almost contradicted the stern aspect of the brow and eye. He was a middle-sized, muscular man, whose well-knit figure and strong proportions were in harmony with his large head and powerful brain. His age did not exceed thirty. After regarding Antonio for some seconds with a slightly sarcastic smile, he pushed across the bottle, saying, as he did so,

“What the devil has come over you, Antonio? Have you no word of welcome for an old acquaintance? Are you out of elbows with the world, that you look so down in the mouth? If so, cut the connexion, and take a commission in my service.”

“I am half tempted to accept your offer, Dolores. To tell you the truth, all has gone wrong with me of late. The devil’s in the dice, in the cards, in the billiard balls. I have not won a single dollar for the last month. My salary for the next year is fore-stalled, my mother is clamorous for money, and my sister don’t choose to sell herself to save me from a gaol. If it was not for my foolish love for this little black-eyed Betsey Baynes, I would make short of a long vexation, and hang or drown myself.”

“And how does that affair of yours prosper?”

“’Tis no go. I have given it up as a hopeless job. As bad luck would have it, young Ingate, instead of being drowned, as any decent fellow would

have been, escaped the wreck, and is now at his uncle's house. Miss Betsey is enchanted with her future husband, who, between ourselves, is a d——d handsome fellow, and the wedding is to come off next week."

"Is there no way, Tony, of preventing the match?"

"None, that I can see."

"Wouldn't it be good fun to run off with the bride?"

"Ay, if the thing were practicable."

"Everything is practicable to a resolute mind. I see very little difficulty in the way. Are you acquainted with this Cockney rival of yours?"

"I see him pass the counting-house every morning for a stroll in the garden or on the beach with Miss Betsey. Confound him! I'm sure the little jade makes fun of my misery, for he looks at me with such a laughing, quizzical face, as much as to say, 'Mr. Antonio, I have robbed you of your sweetheart!'"

"Let him look to his own. We may be able to turn the tables on him yet. Antonio, there's my hand. I promise to win the lady for you, but only on two conditions. First, that you embark your fortunes with me; secondly, that you assist me in obtaining the hand of the most lovely of women,—your sister Marcella."

"Marcella!" cried Antonio, turning very pale. "I hoped that you had forgotten her."

"Who that had once seen Signora De Trueba could ever accomplish such a miracle? It is chiefly on her account that you see me here. I love her to distraction, and will make her mine in spite of fate."

"I am sorry for it," said Antonio. "She cannot be your wife."

"How—not be my wife? D—— it, man, you have changed your tone since the *Defiance* anchored

in this bay last spring. Is she dead, or married? Speak out—speak boldly. I'm neither a coward nor a fool. I'd know the worst."

"She is alive, and well, but—"

"Curse your buts. What then?"

"She is engaged to marry Andrew Abbot, the rich old planter."

"'Tis false!" roared Dolores. "An infernal lie! Don't attempt to deceive me. Don't tell me, a girl of Marcella's beauty and sensibility would sell herself to that vulgar, sensual dotard. I know better. Your mother and your precious self have betrayed her into such a sacrifice. You know you have. Was this, Antonio, acting the part of a friend?"

"Well, I don't say that it was. It was mother's fault. She behaved like a wild beast, and we all had to succumb to her. You must not be so unreasonable, Dolores. Our necessities were urgent; we were compelled to act as we did. Besides, are you so certain that she would have preferred you? Most women tremble at the name of a pirate."

"Ay, there it is. But pirate though I be, I am, I flatter myself, a superior human animal to this beastly planter. I am young, strong, energetic, brave. Merciful to those who deserve mercy, cruel and relentless alone to those who are unworthy of human sympathy. Yes, I am a pirate!—an outlaw! Heaven knows by what cruel persecution of bad men I was driven to adopt this lawless profession. But now that I have adopted it, I am not ashamed of the trade. I would as soon be a free trader in blood and plunder as a legally hired one, and follow my own code of laws, dictated by the impulse of my own will, as bend to some marine tyrant, the little despot of a cringing, servile crew. In what am I worse than other men? All in turn prey upon each other.

Man's proper enemy is man, through every grade of society. How does the priest, the lawyer, the soldier, obtain a living? Licensed hypocrites, rogues, and murderers! Look at the slaver, living beneath the protection of the laws, his damnable trade sanctioned and upheld by a powerful government. Am I worse than the brutal trader in the bones and sinews of men? I meet my antagonist in fair combat, and the boldest and the strongest wins the spoil. If I kill, it is only in self-defence, and the plank often forestalls the gallows by only a few years."

"You make me almost in love with your profession," said Antonio, "you defend it with such enthusiasm. If Marcella could see you now, with those flashing eyes, with that bold air and determined bearing, I don't know what might be the result."

"Ay; if she could only behold me as the man, and sink the pirate, I might hope for success. Women are frightened at names, not at realities. Were she only mine—mine on the deck of my own dashing craft, I would not despair of winning her regard. You, Antonio, must help me to place her there, and my gratitude to you shall be as boundless as my love to her."

"I certainly would prefer you as a brother-in-law to Abbot. But see, now, how I'm situated. Abbot has promised to pay all our debts (and he is our principal creditor) the day he is married to Marcel. These amount to upwards of two thousand dollars. He adds a bonus of a thousand more, to set me up on my legs again. If you can outbid him, I will do my best to assist you in carrying off Marcel."

"Hang me! but you are a mercenary dog, Master Antonio. You the son of a Spanish nobleman! Fie upon you! Thank heaven! I have not

the keeping of your conscience. I infinitely prefer the charge of my own, dyed deep as it is with the recollection of many a bold and lawless deed. But I accept your terms. As you are determined to put Marcella, the peerless, up to sale, I will prove my value for your merchandise by offering a royal price. I will pay over to you ten thousand crowns the day that makes Marcella my wife."

"Done!" cried Antonio, springing to his feet, and clapping his hands together in an ecstasy of delight. "She is yours! she is yours! To-night, to-morrow, any time you name. Abbot will get his dismissal the moment I breathe this golden offer into my mother's ears. And Marcella, if she be not a fool, will rejoice in the exchange. But are you in earnest, Dolores? Do you really mean what you say?"

"On my word as a pirate, which, you well know, has never been broken,—by these pistols, that never missed a foe,—this knife, that has found its way to many a bold heart, I swear to perform what I have promised."

"How shall we arrange our plans?"

"You best know the haunts of the parties."

"If you can entrap Miss Baynes and her lover, carrying off Marcella will be an easy exploit. She has been nursing a sick man for the last week, who lies ill at one of the negro huts in our lane."

"Nursing a sick man!" cried Dolores, grasping him by the shoulder. "Who, and what is he?"

"By St. Yago! I don't know. I never troubled my head to inquire. I only heard from my mother that he was ill of the fever; and that Marcel was to be well paid for her trouble. Some person of no consequence, I expect."

"There's not much to be dreaded from a man

suffering under that infernal fever—that curse of your glorious islands,” mused Dolores; “but I don’t much like the position. Pity is ever akin to love, and in her case is very apt to end in it. Was the invalid old or young?”

“Can’t say. But, at any rate, it is a matter of small consequence. I was going to observe, that Marcel always comes home at night to sleep. Some of your fellows can be lurking in the lane, and they cannot fail to secure their prize. I shall be near at hand to lend my valuable aid; and mother, apprised of our project, will offer no factious opposition; Marcella of course will shriek murder, but I can soon stop her mouth.”

“And your mother?”

“You surely don’t want her?” said Antonio with a grin.

“Certainly not, if I wished the *Defiance* to make her next port in safety. But, my dear fellow, if you sail as mate with me—what is to become of the old lady?”

“She’s like a cat—always falls on her feet. Madame De Trueba is old enough and cunning enough to make out a living. But I will act honestly, Dolores. I will give half the sum you have promised me to Madame, and cut the connexion for ever. Will that satisfy your scruples?”

“Perfectly! and now, boy, to action. I will set spies to dog young Ingate’s path, while you take the necessary steps to secure your sister. Doubt not that we will have a merry wedding; and that our fair brides, like the Sabine virgins, will grow into a huge affection for their ravishers. Stay one moment, Antonio. Can you tell me, in what part of the town I am to look for a busy, meddling, malicious,

black-headed, black-hearted fellow, who goes by the name of Benjamin Levi?"

"The Editor of the ———. What do you want with him?"

"I have a long reckoning to settle. A reckoning which he never expected to be called upon to pay. It shall be done too in a coin he little dreams of, which is not allowed to pass current by the laws of the realm. But no matter, it shall pass current with him."

"Dolores, you astonish me! How did you become acquainted with Benjamin Levi?"

"More than twenty years ago. The fellow has been my evil genius ever since,—has persecuted me from land to land by his slanderous tongue, until he has brought me to be the character I am. Know him?—Yes, I only know him too well. I was a boy, when I first unwittingly affronted him in the streets of London. He was following his sorry calling, dressed in a greasy green gaberdine, with a canvas bag upon his shoulders calling, Old clo! old clo! from house to house and street to street. Boy like, I mocked his voice and manner, and little imagined that I was rousing up a demon, that was to hunt me and my good name to destruction. The fellow is rich and prosperous, I hear."

"One of the wealthiest men in the place."

"So much the better. It will render my vengeance more complete. Ha! ha! I think how he will stare in blank amazement, when he sees the injured Scotch lad whose character he defamed rise before him like a spectre from the other world. I was poor and friendless, struggling to obtain bread for my widowed mother in a foreign land, when I met this wretch again. He had accumulated wealth by his

beggarly employment, and was a blustering giant among little-souled men. He saw and recognised the boy who had foolishly hooted him in the streets of London; and he accused me privately to my employer, of having left England on account of dishonest practices. His tale was believed. I was cast friendless upon the world. Every effort I made for a living was blasted by the calumnies of this fiend. My poor mother took it so to heart, she died; and I, in order to obtain a living, joined myself to a crew of desperate men. You know now my reasons for hating this man. If I was the first aggressor, he has written an idle jest in my heart's blood."

"Why Dolores, this fellow is beneath contempt. A bloated toad, bursting with his own self-importance,—a creature whom no one loves or respects."

"Ay, but one whom all men, who have any regard for their reputation, fear. We may despise the venomous reptile that crawls in the dust; but who does not start and shudder when they feel its sting? I never hated aught in the shape of man but this vile Jew. And I am determined to revenge upon him the assassination of my character—my poor mother's maternal agonies and broken heart."

"If you are bent on mischief, I will not stand in your way. Benjamin Levi is no friend of mine; and old Joshua hates him like the devil. The old Satan has a thousand eyes and ears. Take care that he does not discover your arrival in Jamaica."

"He will find it out too soon for his own comfort. Take another glass, Antonio, and let us be going;" and the pirate filled his own.

"Here's success to our schemes, and confusion to all liars and mischief-makers."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RIVAL BEAUTIES.

AFTER Marcella de Trueba parted with Robert Redpath, she turned down a street that led directly to the beach; where Paris, the old negro, was waiting to convey her home in a small boat. As she was passing round the corner of Joshua Baynes's handsome mansion, a slave woman ran out, and told her to come in, as Miss Amy Butler wanted to see her, and consult with her on very particular business.

Wondering what it might be, Marcella, not a little provoked by the delay, followed the negress into the house, and was forthwith conducted by the sable handmaid into the sanctum appropriated solely to the use of Miss (or Mistress, as she was more generally called) Amy Butler.

The jalousies were closed to shut out the sun, but through the open lattices the breeze, that swept off the sea, found a passage, and cooled the intense heat of the apartment. Near the shaded window a little decrepit woman, dressed in white, sat doubled together, in a large well-cushioned rocking chair, the high back and sides padded and covered with snow-white drapery; the yellow, wrinkled face of the recumbent figure alone forming a melancholy contrast to the purity of the spotless dymity. She held a large feather fan in one of her thin shrivelled hands, and a little negro girl was kneeling at her feet, assiduously fanning her with another.

"Sit down, signora," said she, in a feeble voice; motioning Marcella to a seat near her. "What a dreadful day!—it is almost too hot to live. This horrible climate has been killing me by inches for the last twenty years."

"Missa Butler quite young; Missa live many long years yet, before she go to heaben," suggested the sable ventilator.

"Juno is right," said her mistress with a sickly smile; "I am not old; it is the climate that has made a wreck of me. Ah me! it is melancholy to think how it has changed a fairy form, and a beautiful face. Yes, signora, I was the belle of St. Alban's, before I came to this horrid island with my sister Charlotte, when she married Joshua Baynes. A low marriage to one of her degree!—But she would have him, in spite of all my remonstrances. She gained little by the sacrifice—a churlish husband, and an early grave. I promised by her death-bed to be a mother to her child, and I have kept my word. Dear, dear, she ought to be more attentive to my comforts, considering the terrible trouble she has been to me, and all I have lost and suffered on her account. It is no fault of mine that I never married; I had offers by the dozen. Officers, judges, and civilians have worshipped at my feet. I might have been the wife of the Governor, but I gave up my own prospects in life to be a mother to her, and now she is going to leave me without one twinge of remorse: but I will return to England; I shall recover my health and bloom there. Fetch me a glass of liquor, Juno, I feel faint and overcome with this intolerable heat."

Marcella listened patiently to this long harangue. She had known Mrs. Amy from a child, but never

under any other form than that of a very ugly, hump-backed little woman—a perfect antidote to the softer passions.

“ You wished to see me on business, Mrs. Amy ; I am in a great hurry ; and the boat is waiting in the sun to take me home.”

“ Ah, yes, about these hateful wedding garments ; you have heard the news,—young Ingate is here, and Betsey is to be married next week. There is something to me extremely indelicate in this haste. In my early days, young ladies never rushed precipitately into such a serious thing as marriage. Never thought of accepting the advances of any young man, before they had been acquainted at least for twelve months. Gracious providence ! how should they know anything of each other in a few days ! It is too bad—really too bad.”

Marcella stood gazing at the old lady with a bewildered stare, as if she doubted the evidence of her senses ; when the door was thrown lightly open, and the bride elect, all smiles and good humour, ran in.

“ Ah, Marcella, is that you ? ” cried she ; running up to Marcella, and throwing her arms about her neck. “ You have not been to see me for an age, and I wanted to consult with you about a thousand things. Do you know my cousin Henry is come at last ? and he is a charming fellow,—I am over head and ears in love with him ; and we are to be married next week—married on my birthday ; won’t that be delightful ? ”

“ When did he arrive, Miss Baynes ? ” asked poor Marcella, in a faltering voice ; for she was so confounded and surprised, she knew not what to say.

“ Oh, more than a week ago ; I thought it was the nine days’ wonder, the talk of the whole town. But

why are you so cold and formal, Marcella? why call me Miss Baynes? are we not old playfellows? I thought you would be so glad to hear that I was so happy."

"And your wedding clothes?"

"Never mind the clothes, we will talk of them by-and-by. I want to tell you all about my lover."

"I am in a great hurry, I can't stay this morning; I promised my mother to be home early."

"I see how it is, you are envious of my good fortune. You don't like that I should be married first, when you are so much handsomer than me."

"You forget, I am poor, and you an heiress, Miss Baynes. Were I even as handsome as you say—which I consider a very doubtful point—I would have no chance against such odds."

"Nonsense! you are determined to be disagreeable to-day, Marcella; but prepare for a good laugh, for I have such a funny story to tell you."

The tears were in Signora de Trueba's eyes—she felt more inclined to cry than laugh; while her pretty tormentress, without observing her agitation, rattled on,—

"You know Mrs. Westfall, the gentlemen all call *her* a beauty, and say that she has such a lovely complexion, such incomparable red and white, that she shames the pale faces of us poor creoles. Well, my dear, her fine colour is all a sham; would you believe it, she paints?"

"Impossible! rouge could never supply such a bloom. Besides, my dear Miss Baynes, I have seen her countenance vary with every emotion; you are certainly mistaken."

"I thought I should surprise you; she lays it on

so well, that even aunt, who has the eyes of a lynx in these matters, thought it was natural. Well, the manner in which we came to know all about it is the great joke. My monkey, Tippoo, went over this morning on one of his predatory visits, and Mrs. Westfall had left her dressing-case unlocked, and Leonard, that imp of a boy, caught pug and painted his face red and white, and then sent him over to us. Ha! ha! ha! only think of the rage of the fair Lucinda, when she found out what he had done. I shall never be able to look at her without laughing again."

"It is a judgment upon her," said the little withered yellow-faced Miss Butler. "A real judgment, for the wicked deception she has practised so long. I detest and abhor such vile artifices; painting is a deadly sin. Jezebel painted her face before she looked out of the window, in the hope of seducing Jehu from the performance of his duty. A woman who paints always looks like a courtesan."

"I agree with you there, Mrs. Amy," said Marcella. "But in spite of Leonard's sly trick on the monkey, I cannot believe that his mother's beautiful skin is produced by such a vulgar glaring thing as rouge."

"Ah, you are determined to act the charitable, signora," said Betsey: "to me the fact is unanswerable. But come, I must introduce you to Henry, he is in the next room."

"You must excuse me, I am not well this morning; I cannot see strangers, and in this deshabille."

"You must—you shall; I will take no refusal. But mind you don't fall in love with him, or I shall be horribly jealous."

Throwing her arms round Marcella's waist, and

laughing merrily, such a clear, ringing, joyous laugh, the little black-eyed romp dragged the reluctant, trembling girl, into the adjoining apartment.

One glance at the surreptitious Henry was sufficient to convince the agitated Marcella, that this Amphytrion was not her Amphytrion; but then arose the doubt, and a painful one, which of the twain was the real Henry Ingate? The fair, slight, graceful, almost feminine invalid, corresponded better with her adopted mother's description of her favourite nephew,—the gentle, meek boy, with his blue eyes and flowing curls,—than this dark-eyed, merry-looking Hercules, with his saucy, audacious smile, which might captivate a silly, light-hearted little romp, like Betsey Baynes, but was not exactly the lover that the stately, pensive descendant of a haughty Spanish noble would have chosen. Yet when, upon the call of his affianced, he came forward and gave his hand with that manly, frank, open-hearted air, which is above fear, and looks the world cordially and joyously in the face, Marcella could not help thinking him a handsome, noble-looking man, and that Miss Baynes was a very fortunate girl.

"This, Henry, is Signora De Trueba, the young lady whom your aunt Edward adopted; you must have heard all about her, for Mrs. Ingate was never tired of writing and speaking about her charming Spanish daughter."

Richard had never heard of such a woman as Aunt Ingate; how should he?—and he never had had an aunt of his own, of whom he could have made a substitute; and he was sadly perplexed what to say, so answered with a little blarney. Richard had never visited the celebrated Irish castle, but men of his

warm temperament have no need of kissing the far-famed stone, but possess all its virtues at their tongue's end.

"He was not at all surprised that his aunt should write eloquently, when Nature had supplied her with such a theme,"—and here he bowed low to the dark-eyed quadroon, secretly admiring her elegant form, and the marvellous smallness of her feet.

But suddenly the thought struck him, that this must be the beautiful girl of whom Robert had spoken in such glowing terms—the nurse of his friend, Henry Ingate. Heavens! what if she were to betray him! He bit his lip, and turned to the window. There was an ominous pause. The shrill voice of Miss Baynes calling Betsey to her, fortunately broke the silence, and the young lady, with a slight elevation of her shoulders and projection of her pretty under lip, reluctantly obeyed the summons, and Marcella and Richard were left for a few minutes alone.

"Signora De Trueba," said he, in a low voice, and bending his head towards her ear, "you must think me a very bad fellow—a sad impostor; but in love, as in war, all stratagems are fair. You know *my* secret, and I promise not to betray *yours*. Can I rest upon your honour? for if all I have heard be true, my friend Henry would thank me for assuming just at this crisis the responsibility of his name." He looked into her face with an arch meaning smile, and Marcella looked down with cheeks crimsoned with blushes.

"I think your friend should be made acquainted with the part you are playing," returned Marcella. "If he has no objection to abdicate his right to the lady, I am sure I have none."

"Fairly and honestly spoken," said Richard, laughing. "I admire you for your want of affectation. The thousand and one round-about ways that ladies have in making known their minds! We understand each other, and can rely upon the ticklish nature of our respective situations to be faithful and silent."

"You have nothing to fear from me, sir," said Marcella, proudly, for she did not half like the free and bantering manner in which this last speech was made. "Circumstances, however, may force Mr. Ingate to reveal his alias, as he is at present without the means of supporting himself, until he receives letters from London upon the banks here. This may force him, rather prematurely for your happiness, to seek an interview with his uncle."

"That must not be, until after the wedding. I can borrow any sum of Mr. Baynes for his present use. If he wants thirty or forty dollars, come here to-morrow to see Betsey, and I will let you have it. And mind, don't forget to tell Henry that his banker belongs to the firm of Redpath & Co."

Glad of an opportunity of effecting her escape, Marcella promised to deliver his message, and bowed and withdrew.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE EDITOR FORCED TO EAT HIS OWN WORDS.

THE fair widow had no need of the rouge-pot to adorn her smiling face, the morning that she received her new man of business. The gentlemanly appearance of Robert Redpath had made a very favourable impression on her mind; and she received him in the most friendly and gracious manner, and before Robert sat down to breakfast with the family he found himself quite at home.

The children crowded about the stranger, demanding his name, asking his age, and where he was born, and sundry questions of the like nature, which all children are fond of putting, however inconvenient and *mal à propos* to a new acquaintance.

"For shame! Leonard; be quiet, Elmira; little people should never ask impertinent questions." Then turning to the victimised book-keeper, she said, with a soft bland smile, "I hope, Mr. Redpath, you don't find the children troublesome?"

"Oh, no, not at all;"—Robert was wishing them everywhere but digging their elbows into his knees,—"I am very fond of children."

"That's fortunate; mine are such affectionate, warm-hearted little creatures, that it is impossible to keep them at a distance. Leonard, my dear, put that piece of bread and butter on the plate; you are greasing Mr. Redpath's coat."

"It's of no consequence," said Robert—who was

neat to a fault—wiping the butter from his new dress, and wishing the young lover of Greece anywhere but on the heights of Parnassus,—“Will you love me, my little boy?”

“I don’t know,” replied the urchin, pertly; “I’ll tell you, when you’ve been here a week.”

“I’m afraid I spoil them,” said the widow; “but since I lost my husband, they are all the consolation I have. Elmira, my dear, come down from Mr. Redpath’s knee; you will not allow him to take his coffee. There! you have spilt the cup all over his clothes! You naughty child, I was sure you would do some mischief!”

Robert jumped up, the scalding hot coffee not proving a very agreeable shower-bath. In the hurry of the act, he overturned the cream-pot upon a portion of his dress that had escaped pollution. “Confound the brat!” he would have said, had not the large soft blue eyes of the mother at that moment met his. There was something that seemed to plead for the rude child in that melting glance, which quite subdued his irritated temper, and made him as docile and submissive as a lamb; and he turned the accident off with a laugh.

“Now, mamma, Mr. Redpath has spilt all the cream; and you know it’s so hard to get the milk-woman to sell us any. Is he not quite as naughty as me?” asked Miss Elmira.

“Quite,” returned Robert, “so let us be friends;” and he stooped down and kissed his little accuser. That kiss won the mother’s heart.

Order being at last restored, the parties resumed their breakfast, when a black servant entered with a newspaper on a salver, which he placed on the table by his mistress.

"Oh, the newspaper!" said Mrs. Westfall. "I wonder who suffers this week? I ought not to take it in. My uncle would never speak to me again if he knew it; he has been so grossly abused by the editor, who is the most cantankerous little mortal in the world. But 'tis such an amusing hotch-potch of spite and scandal, that it always keeps my curiosity excited. I really am woman enough to enjoy the malicious caricatures he draws of my neighbours."

"Perhaps, Madam, you would think otherwise if he had ever drawn a portrait of you?"

"Indeed he has not spared me," said the widow, laughing. "It is not long since that he put an advertisement into his paper, describing my premises, and headed with—'A sleeping partner wanted. Inquire of the widow, or at this office.'"

"And did not you resent such a public insult?"

"Oh, dear no. Who cares for what Benjamin Levi says of them? I could not help laughing at it myself, and the whole town laughed with me. I don't know what we should do without the little Jew; he keeps us all alive."

"He had better leave me alone," said Robert, viciously, "if he wishes to keep a whole skin."

Robert felt savage, and leant back in his chair, meditating rather pugnaciously on fat men and abusive editors, until he felt as if the monster of obesity lay at his feet, and he was about to inflict summary vengeance upon him for all his delinquencies. His reverie was interrupted by Mrs. Westfall, who was sipping her tea and glancing over the paper.

"Dear me, Mr. Redpath, I hope this is not meant for you?"

"For me?"

"Yes; for you. Listen."

And with an arch smile on her lip, the pretty widow read aloud the following article, which was headed in large type:—

“A SUSPICIOUS CHARACTER.

“Yesterday morning, a dirty, ragged, half-naked vagabond, entered Mr. Benjamin Levi's store to procure a new suit of clothes. Judging from his appearance, that a very inferior article would suit his wants, that gentleman offered various habiliments for his inspection. To his surprise, this poor individual purchased and actually paid for, the most expensive suit in the store. This was after he had told Mr. L. that he was one of the passengers in the *Maria*, the ship lately wrecked in the squall, in which he declared that he had lost all his property. This *indigent gentleman*, after paying promptly down forty dollars, could lend an idle young woman ten more, and this without any solicitation on her part. This fellow calls himself Robert Redpath, and is looking out for employment in a merchant's counting-house. Our merchants would do well to be upon the lookout, as it is hardly to be credited that the money in this fellow's possession could have been obtained *honestly*!”

“The infernal old scoundrel!” exclaimed Robert, starting from his chair; “my dear madam, will you oblige me with the loan of that paper?”

“Certainly; but what are you going to do with it?”

“I'll make that horrible old Jew eat his own words!”

“I hope you will do nothing rash,” said the lady. “Nothing beyond scolding him well for his impertinence. If you lay a finger upon him, he will bring an action against you, and ruin you with law expenses.”

“I don't care what he does after this!” cried the angry Robert. “I'll make him hold his tongue for ever!” and seizing his hat and cane, he sprang into the street.

As he hurried round a corner, he ran against his brother.

“Heyday, Robert! whither away so fast?”

"Come with me, and see. I'm going to murder that lying Jew!"

"And wish me to be a witness of your sanguinary intentions?"

"Just so. Did you see that infamous article about me in his rascally paper?"

"I have read it. It looks plausible."

"Plausible! what do you mean?"

"What I say. Don't look so fierce, Bob, or I shall think that your hostile intentions are not confined to the Jew. But what are you going to do with old Levi? will you break his spectacles, or pull his nose?"

"You shall see what I will do," said Robert; "and even you, with all your boasted philanthropy, shall be satisfied with my proceedings."

"How wicked you look!" returned Richard, laughing. "Had you allowed your passion to cool, you would have seen what he said about me."

"About you?"

"Ay; about no less a personage. He calls me an artful swindler, who has usurped the name of Mr. Henry Ingate, and kindly warns Mr. Baynes to turn me out of his house."

"And Mr. Baynes?"

"Was almost as angry as you are. For my own part, I begin to think the old fellow is a magician, or gifted with the second-sight, for in this instance he came very near the truth."

"How can you talk with any degree of toleration of such a public nuisance?" said Robert, impatiently; "where will be the best place to find him?"

"The front of Mr. Bacon's store, I have heard, is his general resort. It is there that he harangues all the native politicians, and advocates the glorious

cause of slavery. Where would you look for a Jew in a more appropriate place, than in the land of Ham?"

The brothers now turned into one of the principal streets in the town, and, as Richard had anticipated, they found Levi seated upon a large tea-chest, reading his paper aloud to a knot of idlers, who were gathered about the shop door.

Had George Cruikshank lived in those days, and could have seen the editor, what a glorious portrait he would have made of him! There he sat enthroned—a living, laughing, impersonation of gratuitous mischief. His large, prominent eyes shining like an owl's through his spectacles, his fat cheeks puffed out, and his huge carcass looking as if it had been turned hind part before.

He was dressed in a loose white linen blouse, with an immense straw hat upon his head, his wide trousers scarcely reaching to his ankles, and his short, fat, stumpy legs dangling carelessly down, until the toes of his broad feet just touched the pavement; the curious manner in which his feet were foreshortened, imparting a strange resemblance to the cloven extremities with which painters have thought fit to adorn his Majesty of Evil.

As the brothers advanced, Levi looked up from the paper with a sly grin, and a wink to his companions; but his countenance underwent a slight change when they made part of his audience.

"Mr. Benjamin Levi," said Robert, walking fiercely up to the punchy editor, and presenting the paper he held in his hand, "did you write that article in the paper?"

"I did, sir," said the Jew, with a cold, impudent sneer, "and I perceive that the cap fits well."

"So well, that you will be sorry for having placed it on my head. You have set forth in your vile repository of trash, a base and wilful lie, and I call upon you, before these gentlemen, to retract your words, or I will make a ball of your bloated carcass, and kick you through every street in Kingston."

"Sooner said than done, young man," said Levi, glancing round the circle, to see who would back him, if he ventured to vindicate the libel he had set forth.

Sly winks and suppressed laughter plainly told him, that, however they might seek his company to afford them amusement, they were not his real friends, and greatly relished his present dilemma.

He measured with his eye the light, athletic form of Robert Redpath, backed by the herculean frame of his brother, and wisely concluded, that to try his strength against such odds, would be to play a losing game; he therefore thought it more prudent to back out.

"Well, gentlemen," said he, with a bland smile, "I may have been mistaken. The circumstances, you will admit, looked rather suspicious. I am willing to apologise; will that satisfy you?"

"No, sir, it will not," said Robert.

"I will contradict it in the next number of the paper," said the submissive editor.

"A poor apology to my wounded honour, that;" and Robert surveyed the cringing slave with a glance of haughty contempt. "If you would keep yourself in a whole skin, you must eat up your words."

"Literally?" said Levi, with a grin; "a queer joke that."

"Joke or no joke, you shall do it before I leave this spot," said Robert, tearing the paragraph from

the paper, and presenting it with one hand to the editor, while he flourished his cane over his head with the other. "Quick! I have no time to lose!"

"For God's sake put up your cane, young man. I will endeavour to oblige you as fast as I can."

Amidst roars of laughter, the Jew commenced his strange repast; and as he wiped off the huge drops of perspiration which rolled down his face, Robert almost pitied him the humiliating task.

"The Jew," said his friend Mr. Bacon, "is chewing the cud of repentance."

"I hope that venomous article won't poison him," said another.

"Or injure his digestion," said a third.

"Gentlemen," said the editor, as he slowly descended from his throne of state, and waddled off with his hands pressed ludicrously over his stomach, "pray don't feel the least anxiety on my account; I never was troubled with indigestion in my life!"

CHAPTER XIX.

AN UNFORTUNATE ACCIDENT.

MARCELLA found Henry impatiently waiting for her return.

"You have been long absent, my love; so long, I began to fear that I should not see you again."

"Many things have happened to detain me," said Marcella, unfastening her broad hat; "my visit to the town has neither been very pleasant or propitious."

She then sat down beside him, and gave a minute detail of her unprofitable bargain with the Jew, and her meeting with the two Redpaths.

"The Redpaths living? they were capital fellows, especially Richard, who I expect is my cousin Betsey's lover. But how he has become an inmate of my cautious uncle's house puzzles me not a little. I do not quite relish his assumption of my name; and although I should be sorry to spoil his wooing, I think it but right that Mr. Baynes should be undeceived."

"That cannot be done without betraying yourself," said Marcella, anxiously.

"My dear Marcella, from part of your conversation with the Jew, I fear that stories injurious to your fair fame may be circulated abroad, owing to your connexion with me. To prevent this, you must either consent to become my wife within a few days, or your visits must cease altogether."

"You must not talk to me of marriage, Henry.

To unite yourself to me, would incur the displeasure of your friends, and perhaps mar for ever your future prospects."

"As to that, I have enough—an ample independence, and really have no need of poor little Betsey's fortune to make me a wealthy and independent man. My mother is a *little* too fond of money,—it is her weakness; but she loves her son more than this coveted gold, and will rejoice in his happiness. My uncle is the only person whose anger I have any cause to dread. Your home, my Marcel, is an unhappy one. Your mother and brother are so anxious to sell you to the highest bidder, that they are not likely to throw any obstacles in the way of your union. I will see Redpath, and through him procure a licence this evening, and to-morrow my own Marcella will bless me with her hand. I will then seek an interview with my uncle, and confess the fact of my marriage, and perhaps become instrumental in rendering Betsey and Richard happy. How does this scheme please you?"

Marcella silently pressed his hand to her lips,—her heart was too full for words. Still she had many scruples to urge in her own mind against it. What would Henry think of her mother—a woman whose character was notoriously known in the neighbourhood? Could he tolerate her company, and would she not hang upon them as long as she could extort money? And then Antonio, with his gambling, dissipated habits,—could Henry live on any footing of friendship with such a man? Alas, no! The constant mortification and annoyance of their presence would disgust her husband, and mar all her happiness. It was better, far better to suffer alone. She threw herself weeping upon her lover's breast.

"It cannot—it must not be—at least, not now—not while my mother lives, and my brother remains in Jamaica."

"But why need their presence interfere with our happiness, my love?" and he kissed the tears from her beautiful eyes.

"Oh, you don't know either!" groaned Marcella. "They would not suffer us to remain unmolested. They would cast a shadow over me, that would make you withdraw the light of your love from my heart. Yes, Henry, they would teach you to hate me."

"Nothing on earth, Marcel, could make me do that."

"You don't know what you would do, Henry, when constantly exposed to the demoralizing influence of unscrupulous people; it is so difficult for love to survive disgust. At any rate, I dare not expose either you or myself to such temptation. Let us love on, dearest, and hope for better days."

"How little you must think me, Marcel, to imagine that my mind could be swayed by such trifles!" said Henry, reproachfully.

"We must not despise trifles, Henry. On trifles mainly depend the most important events of life. Trifles are fate."

"But really your objections to making me happy are almost ridiculous."

"Can anything be ridiculous that can occasion me such intense mental distress? Respect my scruples, Henry; they involve your happiness and mine. I am above the selfishness that would sacrifice your respectability and peace of mind, to gratify my love and vanity. Let us look difficulties calmly in the face, and wait for a few months, before we unite our

destinies for ever. I am not afraid of either time or absence diminishing the affection that is based on esteem."

"Marcella, you are my good angel. Perhaps you are right, and I will try to submit to your wishes; but you impose a severe penance on your unfortunate lover. And now tell me, can you escape this marriage with Abbot?"

"Certain of your love, I feel as strong as a lion," said Marcella, with a smile; "I will bid him defiance."

"And this tigress of a mother?"

"Ah!" sighed Marcella, "there is the difficulty; perhaps this money may modify her anger."

"Take it, then, my dear girl,—take every copper of it, and bribe her avarice to treat you well, if possible. It is a pity that the sum is so small."

"To indigent people, ten dollars is a considerable amount," said Marcella. "But you will require some of this?"

"No. I will see Richard, and borrow what I want through him of uncle Baynes; and if you will meet me in the lane this evening, we will discuss together the manner in which we have sped."

"Agreed," said Marcella, tying on her hat. One clasp of the hand, one kiss—a lover's kiss, and she vanished.

On reaching her mother's cottage, what was her horror to find Mr. Abbot in the sitting-room with Madame de Trueba.

"Marcella," said the quadroon, "we were just talking about you. Mr. Abbot's patience is well nigh exhausted. He humbly petitions you to shorten his term of probation, and consent next week to be his wife."

"I am not prepared," said Marcella, turning pale. "I was hoping that he would extend the period, and grant me more time. My heart is very wilful; I cannot teach it to love on such short notice."

"I fear, Miss, that you don't try," said the planter, very sulkily. "Most young ladies' hearts are very pliable. You seem determined not to put yourself out of the way to serve a friend."

"Patience, my good sir; we will talk about the matter a fortnight hence. Let me enjoy the brief season of liberty before the dark days come, in which my soul can find no pleasure."

"I hope you don't mean that as a reflection upon me, Miss? Hang me! if I'm not heartily tired of dancing attendance upon you, and yielding to all your whims. A pretty pass matters are come to, when you can toss up your head in the air, and snap your black eyes at me, as if you were doing me a mighty favour in condescending to be my wife. If you start any more objections, I'll cut the connexion altogether."

"And render me your debtor for life," said Marcella, with a sweeping curtsey. "I am sure, Mr. Abbot, it is the wisest thing you could do; you would never repent taking such a reasonable course."

"Have done with this folly, Marcella!" cried her mother, angrily. "You have promised to become Mr. Abbot's wife, and after all the indulgence he has shown you, such conduct on your part is unpardonable."

"Let her go on, ma'am. Let her go on," said the offended planter, walking to and fro; "there is such a thing as drawing a string too tight. My neck's not in the halter yet, and I'll take good care

to keep it out. You need not turn up your nose at me, miss; there are plenty of girls as pretty as you to be got for the asking. You're a bad set altogether. The mother is bad, the brother no great shakes, and I hear strange stories of you, modest as you look. I think I had better have nothing more to say to you. I hope, Miss, you will forget the offer I made to you, and not go to blab it over the town, or I will speak out the truth plainly, and tell the folks that I was right glad to be off the bargain."

"You are your own master, sir," said Marcella, hardly able to suppress a smile. "The sooner you leave the better."

"Good day, miss!" said Andrew, making a bolt out of the door. "You'll repent of your folly when it's too late."

"Thank Heaven! he's gone," cried Marcella, clapping her hands in triumph.

"Amen!" cried Antonio, springing into the room. "You were quite right, Marcella, to get rid of the brute! I'll soon find you a better husband."

"After this I'll have no more of your providing, Antonio, but mean to choose for myself."

"A pretty kettle of fish you have made of it, signora!" said her mother, glaring at them like a tigress.

"Don't be angry, mother," said Antonio, with a glance of peculiar meaning; "it's all for the best; I should have affronted him myself, if Marcella had lacked the spirit to do so. But tell me, signora, something about your patient. Who, and what is he?"

"Really I don't know. He is able to get about again, and my services are at an end. And here,"

she continued, laying the ten dollars on the table, "is the reward for my week's attendance."

"Pretty well," said Madame de Trueba, her snake-like eyes sparkling at the sight of the gold.

"Just the sum I wanted!" cried Antonio, clutching it from her eager hand.

"Hold! it belongs to me," cried Madame, seizing his arm, and trying to wrench open his hand; "I have the best right to it. It is mine, and I will have it."

"Yes! when you can catch it!" returned the undutiful son. "When money falls into my hands I suffer no one to spend it but myself. Let me alone, mother! for you won't get it!"

"Marcella promised her wages to me, and I will not be robbed by a ruffian like you!"

"For heaven's sake! do not quarrel about such a paltry sum," said Marcella, terrified at the excited and enraged looks of her mother. "Antonio, I beseech you to give up the money."

"Hang me, if I will! She is so unreasonable. She thinks that a young fellow like me can do without money. Stand back, mother! or, by St. Jago! I'll lock you up in your own room till you come to your right senses."

Seizing her up in his arms, he was in the act of executing his threat, when his foot caught in the old ragged mat in the passage, and they both fell heavily on the floor together.

A faint shriek burst from the lips of Madame De Trueba. Marcella sprang to her assistance.

"Rise, Antonio! rise. I fear my mother is hurt."

"Hurt. Pshaw! She's about as much hurt as a cat would be in falling from a window. Hey, mother!" cried he, rising from the floor and shaking

Madame de Trueba's arm. "Now don't pretend to be in a faint. I'm up to all your tricks. You can't play the old soldier over me, as you did when I was a boy."

There was an ominous pause. The young man's countenance suddenly fell.

"What is this? Mother! mother! For God's sake speak to me, mother! I did not mean to hurt you. It was all a joke. Here, take the money. We shall have plenty more soon. Marcella, this is horrible! I believe she's dead!"

Trembling like an aspen, Marcella assisted her brother in lifting up the head of her prostrate parent from the floor. The young people looked doubtfully at each other, with faces full of sorrow.

"She is dead! Antonio," whispered Marcella, as if she feared to trust her voice above a breath. "The door-step has struck her full on the temple, and the blood is trickling from her mouth and ears. Ah, my unhappy mother! What is to be done?"

"I know what I must do," said Antonio. "If I stay here I shall be accused of having murdered her. I must be off."

"And leave me alone with the dead? You cannot be so cruel. Go for a doctor, Antonio, and relate the circumstance as it really occurred. I can bear witness for you, that although your conduct was most undutiful, you meant her no injury."

"Marcella, that will never do. You don't know into what difficulties we may be brought by this unlucky accident. Murder is a hanging matter, and though we have not murdered her, the circumstances are very suspicious. Your only chance of safety is to fly this night with me."

"Fly! and whither?"

"That has yet to be determined—as chance or fate wills it. Look you—I will carry the body into this chamber. You and Minerve can sew it up in a sheet, and when night comes, I will take it off in the boat, and drop it a few miles from shore. She will not be missed for some days. We can bribe Minerve to secrecy, and make her the partner of our flight."

"Oh, Heaven! have mercy upon her, and forgive you," said Marcella, clasping her hands and looking down upon the body in tearless agony. "And is it come to this—that I can see you dead, my mother, and shed no tear? I, that have often wept over a dead bird, have no tears for my own mother! This is sin—this ought not to be. Poor mother! my heart bleeds for you, but I cannot weep."

Antonio leant against the wall, his arms folded on his chest, staring vacantly on the ghastly face, whose dark lustreless orbs seemed to scowl upon him, and give back his intent and despairing gaze.

"Marcella," said he, in a hollow voice; "close those eyes—in mercy close them. I cannot turn mine from them—there is an icy horror in them that chills my brain."

With a trembling hand, Marcella laid her handkerchief over her mother's face.

"Heaven bless you! Marcel," said Antonio, bursting into tears, and flinging himself on his knees beside the corpse. "I feel more myself when those accusing eyes are not looking into my soul."

How Marcella envied him those tears!

"Mother, speak to me once more—say that you forgive me; with all my faults, Heaven knows I never meant to hurt you! The crime, if crime there be, is your own. The quarrel of your own seeking.

"I would not, for all the world, have wilfully committed this act of violence."

"Antonio," said Marcella, solemnly; "you loved my mother. You had reason to love her—for she doated upon you. And can you bear to put her in the earth without book or bell? Her soul will never rest in the grave if you bury her like a dog."

"You are too superstitious, Marcel. Mother cared for none of these things."

"I should not like to be buried in that way," continued Marcella, who was very credulous, and believed in supernatural appearances, and supernatural agency; "lest the wrath of Heaven should rest on my soul. Ah, I wonder how it will speed with our poor mother in another world! If there be a heaven, shall I ever meet her there?"

"Marcella, you make my flesh creep," said Antonio, shuddering. "There are some subjects about which I never dare ask questions—and that is one of them." Then looking up, he started, exclaiming, "'Tis near sunset already. Time is precious. I must go down to the shore and get the boat ready. Help me, Marcel, to carry the body into her room."

When this melancholy task was performed, Antonio turned to go; but Marcella caught his arm.

"Brother! do nothing rash. Let me go to the next magistrate and state the facts. Believe me, it would be better in the end."

"It would hang us both. I will be back in half an hour. You get the body ready, and pack up a few traps, and we must be off."

Antonio was hardly gone before there was a slight tap at the door, and Minerve, who had witnessed the whole scene, and heard all that had passed from the open kitchen door, stole up to the bed on which the

body lay, and beside which Marcella was kneeling in an agony of grief and prayer; and said, in a low voice:

"Missie, what is, must be. No tears bring back de dead to life. But much good still remain to de living."

"Minerve, this is a dreadful business;" and Marcella raised her hot flushed face from between her hands. "I wish that I could weep."

"I know all about it, missie. See, hear all dat pass. If it found out, Massa Antonio die. Dey will hang him for de murder of the ole mistress—but he no die. Hear me, missie; I ole—hab nobody in de wide wide world dat care for me; I say to de magistrate—I quarrel wid de ole mistress—I strike her on de head—I no mean to kill—but God kill—he know if she deserve death. I leabe it wi' him—den all de blame, de punishment, fall on me; I glad—berry; I tired of work, work all my days—glad to get back to my husband and little ones in de far land."

"Dear, noble, generous Minerve! do you think we would suffer you to die for us?"

"Why mayn't a poor negress die for de children ob her love? Go, dear missie, get your tings in order to fly wid Massa Antonio. Leabe me here to tell my own tale, and take care ob de dead."

Hardly conscious of what she did, Marcella began collecting a few articles of dress, which she tied up in a bundle; and then again sank down beside the bed in a stupor of despair.

Was flight absolutely necessary? was she obliged to leave Jamaica, and all that now had become so dear to her, because Antonio had met with this fearful accident? What would Henry think of her sudden flight? How would he interpret her strange

conduct? At all events she must speak to him—must tell him that an inexorable destiny obliged them to part.

While buried in these agonizing reflections, Minerva had quickly done what was necessary for the corpse, and the body lay decently wrapped in a sheet of stainless white upon the bed. But the spirit of peace, that generally broods with such holy calm, finding its beautiful wings above the dead, was not there. The scowling brow, and the defiant lip, retained the dark shadow that the malignant soul had cast from the hot furnace of passion upon the pliant clay. Marcella gave one glance at the hideous aspect, and turned shuddering away.

"Marcella," said a voice near her, "are you ready?"

"I shall be presently, Antonio. Give me one hour, one little hour, I beseech you."

"We have no time to spare. But look you, Marcel, I have arranged our plan. It is briefly this—while you step into your own chamber, two trusty fellows will help me to remove the body to the boat."

"Oh, bury her decently; in mercy, bury her!" cried Marcella, clinging to his arm.

"The deep sea tells no tales. It will take us half-an-hour, or perhaps more, to accomplish our task. You will be ready on my return. I have engaged a passage for you and Minerva on board a merchant vessel, bound to the Havanna, which sails about midnight. Of course, people will imagine that our mother accompanies us on the voyage; and, if ever we return, it can be told to any one who thinks it worth their while to inquire after her, that she died on her passage out."

"Oh, it is dreadful, Antonio! It all appears like a horrible dream—too shocking to be real."

"It is only too true. But I hear the men coming. Go, Marcel, we will do all that is necessary."

The poor girl mechanically obeyed. She staggered rather than walked into her little bed-room, and sat down on the side of the couch, with a confused unconsciousness of the terrible scene enacting in the next room. She heard the trampling of feet, the sound of gruff voices lowered to a hoarse whisper, and the stifled sobs of Minerve, who, in spite of the cruel treatment she had received from Madame de Trueba, had become attached to her from habit.

At length, a dead silence pervaded the house. Marcella sprang to the open lattice. The moon had risen, and was silvering all the foliage with a calm and subdued light; all was peaceful, beautiful and holy, as the sinless aspect of nature ever is. Four dark figures cautiously crossed the garden, and entered the lane, bearing between them a heavy load, wrapped in a dark pouche. Marcella knew what lay concealed under its sombre folds, and, with a wild scream, she passed her head against the window frame, exclaiming, "My mother! oh, my mother!" And for the first time the tears that had been repressed by the hot fever in her brain burst freely forth. She had been weeping for some time with uncontrollable violence, when Minerve put her sorrowful black face in at the door. The negress was already equipped for a journey; the faithful creature, having collected what was necessary for the voyage; Marcella, in the bewildered state of her mind, totally overlooking the absolute necessity of their flight.

"Missie! Missie! Massa Henry in de lane. Must speak one word wid you. I tell him, missie ill; he no believe; he must see wid his own eye, an' speak wid his own mouth."

"Henry! ah, I had forgotten. Yes, I must see him. Give me my silk hood and scarf, Minerve. Ah, wretched me. What can I say to him?"

Hastily wrapping the scarf round her shoulders, and drawing the black hood over her pale face, Marcella glided from the house. A few paces down the lane, partly concealed beneath the shade of a large group of trees, she discovered her lover. He sprang to meet her, and drawing her to his breast, said in a low reproachful voice, "Marcel, you forgot your promise; I was here two hours ago; and after waiting for some time, I was afraid of a discovery, and returned to the hut. I could not rest, however, without seeing you. Since our last conversation I have been so miserable and restless! felt as if a dark cloud was hanging over me, that would burst and overwhelm us both."

"Such feelings are always prophetic," said Marcella. "The cloud has already burst, and we must part. Yes, my beloved Henry, my first, my last, my only love—this meeting must be our last."

She threw herself weeping upon his bosom. Their tears mingled with passionate kisses and convulsive sighs.

"You are not in earnest, Marcel, my own Marcel! you must give me a reason for your conduct, before you can expect me to submit passively to this terrible sentence."

"I cannot—the secret is not mine, but involves the safety of others. I dare not confide it even to you. In another hour I shall be on the ocean, on my way to the Havanna."

"Ay, and this gentleman, who seems so nervous at the idea of parting with you, will, I am sure, be glad to become the partner of your voyage," said

Antonio, stepping between them. "Here, Dolores," he cried, turning to the pirate, who headed a gang of lawless looking ruffians, "take your promised bride."

Resistance was useless; Marcella and her lover offered none. They already anticipated their fate, and felt a melancholy satisfaction in the prospect of dying together.

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CHAPTER XX.

WHICH CONCLUDES THE WHOLE MATTER.

THE pirate and his men hurried the prisoners down to the beach, where a boat lay rocking in the surf to receive them. At a short distance from the place of embarkation, they perceived the dark figure of a man reclining upon a heap of stones.

"Hallo, friend! what are you doing there?" cried Dolores. "Looking for honest men by the light of the moon?"

"With small chance to find them," responded the dark mass, "if I'm to take those before me for a specimen."

"Fond of a joke, messmate. I'm fond of one myself; so I let your words pass for what they are worth."

"Will he betray us?" whispered Antonio; "I know that man—'tis an old sailor that frequents the Ship tavern. They call him Ben Waters. I think that he's a man-of-war's man in the British service."

"If I thought so," said Dolores, "I would soon pitch him to the sharks. But I don't think he will trouble his head about us, or our affairs; and I hate shedding blood when it can possibly be avoided."

Marcella put back her hood, and turned her eyes,

full of significant meaning, upon the face of the old man as they passed. A quiet, and almost imperceptible nod, which was noticed alone by her, convinced Marcella that she was recognised, and that the old man, if he lacked the power to save her, at least sympathised in her fate.

She was now placed beside her lover in the boat, and a signal from Dolores sent the light pinnace dancing over the waves.

Walking along the beach, at his usual sauntering pace, Waters seemed to have forgotten the existence of the party; and the pirate, who was watching his movements through his glass, bantered Antonio on being afraid of a poor, harmless old man. But the moment the boat rounded a point of land, and was out of sight, Waters quickened his pace until he reached the wharf, when he threw himself into a boat, and told a black sailor, to whom it belonged, to put him on board the revenue cutter that was at anchor in the bay.

Terrified at what had befallen them, but not entirely without hope, Marcella quietly submitted to circumstances. She sat beside Henry, her hand clasped in his, and gathered courage from the stern and manly expression that had succeeded the hitherto feminine gentleness of his fair pale face.

After pulling along the shore for several miles, they came alongside of a long, black, rakish-looking vessel, that was anchored near the entrance of a creek that came tumbling from the table-land above, and discharged its waters at this point into the sea.

The prisoners were hoisted on board, the boat secured, and orders given to hoist up the anchor, and bear away from the shore.

Marcella leant against the side of the vessel, her

eyes fixed upon the long, rippling line of light which the sinking moon cast upon the waters; when Dolores, who was really a dashing fellow, sauntered to her side, and lifting his Spanish hat, begged her not to be the least uneasy at her novel situation; that no violence would be offered to her or her companion; that his sole view in carrying her off, was to render himself happy; which, he was very sorry, could not be effected without some inconvenience to her fellow-prisoner. But come," cried he, "you must stand in need of some refreshment. The vessel is now fairly under weigh, and I will introduce you to another loving pair, who may be considered as a sister and brother in misfortune."

Marcella and Henry tacitly obeyed, and followed the pirate into the cabin.

A large lamp was swinging from the ceiling, but it was so dark below, that it was some minutes before the captives could distinguish the objects around them. Seated upon the floor, with her head sunk between her knees, and her long, dark locks floating loosely over her shoulders, Marcella discovered her old friend, Betsey Baynes; and near her, his arms folded sternly across his breast, proud and defiant, stood Richard Redpath.

"I need scarcely introduce you to each other," said Dolores, in the same bantering tone. "The ladies, I perceive, are friends already; the gentlemen old comrades. If these silly girls will but dry their tears, we will have a merry bridal before midnight; and I promise to make them the happiest women on earth."

A disdainful flash, from the dark streaming eyes of Betsey, was the only reply made to this speech.

"Be wise, signora," continued Dolores; "your

obstinacy will only provoke me to further resistance, and may injure those whom you hope to preserve from death. Submit cheerfully to your fate, and no harm shall happen to your lover beyond being set on shore on some distant island. Resist my authority, and he shall walk the plank before morning."

Betsey raised her eyes to Richard's face, and met his bold determined glance. "I do not fear death, Betsey," said he, proudly. "Persist in your resolution. Death, which is a bugbear to the rich and prosperous, is ever a friend of the unfortunate."

"They may do their worst," said the hitherto spoiled and wayward child of fortune. "They cannot force me to marry this Antonio de Trueba, whom I despised before as a vain, shallow fool, but whom I now hate and scorn as an execrable villain. Cousin of mine, when the hour of trial comes, you shall find my courage equal to your own."

"I answer to that title," said Henry Ingate, stepping forward; "my friend Richard, I find, has borrowed it to some purpose. Give me your hand, my brave young kinswoman. I feel proud of my relationship to such a noble souled girl. This lady, who is a sister in misfortune, is my affianced bride."

Marcella and Betsey threw themselves into each other's arms, and wept bitterly.

"Really, gentlemen, I feel sorry for your disappointment," said Dolores; "but as I do not apprehend much danger of your breaking your hearts, I cannot give up the advantage I have gained, in order to make you happy. Every one for himself, and Heaven for us all, has long been my motto. I dare say you will consider me a cruel, barbarous, selfish fellow; but I cannot meet with a beautiful wife every day; and my admiration and love for the woman of

my choice is equal to your own. I have loved her for years, and will only resign my prize with life."

The calm impudence of the pirate forced a smile, in spite of himself, from Richard Redpath. "You act according to your nature and your calling," said he, "and really are a decent fellow for a pirate, —a man who, if I mistake not, has seen better days, and was meant for better things. We are in your power, fettered and helpless, yet I feel a confidence in your better feelings, which leads me to hope that you will shield these unfortunate ladies from violence. For myself, I neither ask nor expect favours. I am a man, and can meet my fate as one."

The pirate was strangely touched by this speech. He turned his eagle eye upon the frank, fearless face of the speaker. His lip quivered for a moment, and he was about to reply, when his attention was drawn from his prisoners by a strange sort of puffing and snorting, which proceeded from a dark corner of the cabin.

"What upon earth, Captain, have you here?" said Antonio, who just entered with an additional light.

"Look for yourself, my friend," said Dolores. "It is like nothing in heaven above or in the earth beneath. A strange, amphibious monster, whom I caught this afternoon, prowling round your premises, Antonio, either in search of a pretty girl, or the philosopher's stone. If I had him in a menagerie, he would make my fortune."

"Cease your funning, Captain, and let me go," growled forth the dark mass in the corner. "The death of an innocent man like me will not redound much to your credit."

"Innocent!" shouted Dolores, dragging the living heap into the middle of the cabin, and holding the

light, so as fully to reveal the brazen face of Benjamin Levi. "I wonder how long ago it is since you were weaned? Pray, ladies and gentlemen, cease to lament over your hard fate, and contemplate the wrongs and sufferings of this helpless little innocent."

Richard turned his eyes upon the Jew, and, in spite of his own ticklish situation, his gravity gave way, and he burst into a peal of laughter. The editor was sitting upon the cabin floor, with his short fat legs spread out, in order to balance his huge body. The spectacles had fallen from his nose, and his large eyes were rolling in his head with a look of bewildered amazement; his impudent face was white with terror, and his teeth chattered audibly in his jaws. Such a baby! The thought was too absurd. Richard wondered if he had ever been a gentle, inoffensive miniature of humanity, and then he laughed afresh.

"Well, sir," cried Dolores, who, pirate and scamp as he was, dearly loved the ridiculous, and who was tormenting his prey in the same amiable manner that a cat does a mouse, "have you made your peace with heaven? Are you ready to walk the plank?"

"Heaven!" groaned the Jew, "you have given me too short a notice ever to get there. I have not time to repent of half my sins."

"I believe you," said Dolores; "it would take a whole life to do that, and in all probability you would not get there after all."

"Oh, save my life, most honourable captain!" cried the editor, striving to bend his fat knees, "and I will turn Christian, and pray for the salvation of your soul."

"Reserve your prayers for yourself, Benjamin; I am sure you will need them all. You are not very likely to prove a successful pleader."

"And must I die?" cried the abject creature.

"Ay; or become sole monarch of a desert island, known alone to me and my crew. But this mitigation of your sentence can only be obtained on one condition."

"Life is sweet," said Levi, "name your conditions."

"That you turn parson, and marry my friend, Antonio de Trueba, and me, to these ladies. A bishop's gown would well become that capacious person of yours."

"I accept the terms," said Levi; "devoutly hoping that one concession may lead to another."

"Ay, you would say Amen to the devil," returned the pirate, "if you thought it would save your worthless life, or that you could gain a few paltry dollars by the apostasy. You imagine that you are speaking to a stranger. Put on your spectacles, and look me steadily in the face. Jew, do you know me now?"

Levi surveyed the pirate with a long and curious gaze, until he cowered down before the piercing glance of that strangely powerful eye.

"Speak; do you know me?"

The Jew shook his head.

Dolores laughed—a bitter, ironical laugh.

"I always thought you possessed a peculiarly retentive memory; recollecting persons and events which no one but yourself ever knew or heard of. Benjamin Levi, I know you of old, and you know me. Have you forgotten Walter Merigney? Have you forgotten your residence in Havanna?"

The Jew started, as some dark recollection flitted through his black heart.

"Yes, wretch! it was your vile malignant spirit, your base falsehoods, that brought me to this; that made me what I am. Were I as fond of killing men, as you are of murdering characters, you would not breathe another moment the breath of life, or escape the damnation you so richly deserve. But come, sir priest, up and be doing. Antonio, bring the prayer-book; I am impatient to call this pale sister of yours my wife."

While he was yet speaking, a confused noise was heard upon the deck, and the officer second in command rushed down into the cabin.

"Arm! arm!" cried he; "we are betrayed. An English man-of-war is bearing down upon us."

"You despised my warning, Dolores," said Antonio: "this would not have happened if you had shot that old sailor."

"Recriminations are useless; we are called upon to fight, not to waste our time in idle words," said the pirate. "Ferdinand, secure these prisoners. Come, Antonio, this is a good opportunity to show of what manner of stuff you are made, and whether you are deserving of the lady."

"Thank heaven!" murmured Marcella, as they left the cabin. "We owe this interposition in our favour to Ben Waters. I read in the glance of the old man's eye that he would not suffer us to be lost without making an effort to save us."

"'Tis a glorious old fellow!" cried Richard. "I owe him a large debt of gratitude, which I hope I may live to pay."

A gun was fired from the English vessel to bring the pirate to.

"It makes my blood boil to be chained like a felon, when there's work like this to do," continued Richard, stamping with vexation. "That one should be rendered incapable of striking a blow for those so dear."

"My dear friend, it's of no use chafing and fretting like an imprisoned lion," said Henry. "Patience is the only virtue which violence has left us; and we must endeavour to strengthen that, for should the pirate prove victorious, a by-no-means impossible event, we shall find it put to a severe test."

"The pirate! He's a fine dashing fellow. Left to himself, we have little to fear from him; for I feel assured his better nature would never suffer him to execute the violence he threatens. But this Antonio De Trueba, as they call him, is a mean, pitiful scoundrel! A sordid wretch, for whom hanging is too good! The plot against our liberty, I am certain, originated with him, not with Dolores."

"How did you and my cousin fall into their hands?" said Henry.

"Well, it all happened so suddenly, I can scarcely tell. Betsey and I were strolling on the shore, talking soft nonsense under the light of the moon, when we were surrounded by a band of armed men, forced into a boat, and brought hither. It was but the work of a few minutes. I was seized from behind, and thrown upon the ground, without being given an opportunity of making the least resistance; and poor Betsey fainted, and didn't recover her senses until we reached the vessel."

"Hark!" cried the Jew, with looks of alarm. "I knew it would come to this. That Dolores is such an obstinate, bloodthirsty ruffian, he'll never

give in. They are clearing the ship for action, and we shall certainly be killed."

He was right in his conjectures.

Dolores, finding escape impossible, determined to fight it out, and sell his life and the lives of his crew as dearly as possible. A few minutes of breathless suspense, and the engagement commenced.

First came the rapid tread of many feet, as each man sprang to his post; then the roar of the guns, which made the tight vessel rock from stem to stern; the shouts of the assailants, the yells and oaths of the assailed, the cries and groans of the dying, all mingling in one horrid and confused din.

The women buried their faces in their garments, and tried to calm their terrors in prayer, while the men stood, with erect figures and stern pale faces, listening to each varied sound with intense excitement. At length there came a crash, followed by a long wild shout, a desperate rush, and then the firing suddenly ceased. Strange voices sounded upon the deck, and strange faces crowded into the cabin.

"We are saved!" cried Marcella, starting from the ground. "Betsey, Henry, we are saved! these are friends," and, overcome by her feelings, she burst into an hysterical fit of weeping.

"You may thank old Ben for that same," cried the honest tar, hastening to set Richard and Henry at liberty. "This is the first action you have ever been in. I dare say you've had enough of it, and hope it may be the last. The pirate fought well,—would have been a hero if he had died in a better cause,—cheering on his men to resist to the last, though his heart's blood was poured out upon the deck."

"Are they all dead?" asked Marcella, with a shudder.

"We have some prisoners," said Waters in a low voice, meant only for her ear. "But the man whom you want courage to inquire after is dead."

Marcella wrapped her face in her black silk scarf, and spoke no more. Whoever had been the gainer by the victory, she had lost a brother. One whom she could not regret, but whose past life and tragic death filled her with horror.

Captain Wharton now came forward to congratulate the ladies on their safety, and to inform them that the boat waited to take them on shore.

Seeing Benjamin Levi officiously offering his assistance to Miss Baynes, he said with a smile, "This adventure, Mr. Levi, will afford a famous paragraph for your paper."

"Yes, Sir; and from an eyewitness. That scoundrel, Dolores, deserved what he got. It's a pity he was not taken alive. If a man had been wanting to hang him, I would have hung him myself."

"To you, at least," whispered Richard, "he proved himself a generous enemy."

The sun was just rising as the party were safely landed at the broad stone steps that led to the verandah in front of Joshua Baynes's handsome mansion. But here a new difficulty occurred. It was necessary for several persons in the drama to change characters; and there were some doubts in their minds, as to the manner in which the old planter would receive the performers.

They found Mr. Baynes ill in bed with a fit of the gout. He had taken the abduction of his daughter

so much to heart, that his medical adviser was uneasy about the state of his patient's head. The sight of his dear child restored him instantly to his right mind; and the excess of joy was almost as dangerous to the excited father as that of grief.

After kissing and embracing his daughter tenderly, he made her sit down upon the side of his bed, and repeat over the whole adventure; not suffering her to omit the most trifling particulars; at the termination of every sentence, clapping her on the shoulder, and exclaiming, "My girl is safe! My dear little girl is safe! We shall have a fine wedding yet. Why, Betsey, my darling, it would have broken your old father's heart, if he had lost you for ever."

Richard now introduced Henry Ingate to his uncle, and briefly explained the imposition that had been practised upon him.

Old Joshua sat up in his bed. His brow contracted into a frown, and he looked so grave, that Betsey, afraid of the result, retreated behind the bed curtain, and began to weep. After carefully surveying the two young men for some time in silence, the planter burst into a hearty laugh.

"My Betsey knew best the husband that would suit her; and though I don't know what my sister Hannah will think of the exchange, I can't blame Betsey for preferring a fine, tall, manly fellow, like Mr. Redpath, to a pale, sickly, woman-faced lad like that. No disparagement to you, Henry. You can't help your looks, and may be a very good young man, for aught I know to the contrary. Come, Bess, leave off crying. I'm not angry with you, Mr. Redpath; give me your hand. I feel proud of you; proud

to call you my son. Take my girl, and my blessing with her."

"Have you no blessing for me and my bride, uncle," said Henry, good-naturedly leading Marcella up to his bedside. "I shall begin to think that Richard has cut me out of your heart, as well as out of my wife."

"By George!" said the old man. "I did not think that you had blood enough in you to woo and win a wife on such short notice."

"I have been ill with fever. You will not find me quite such an effeminate lady-like young gentleman as you imagine;" and the colour flushed Henry's cheek.

"As to your wife, Henry, I know her to be a good girl; though I do not much admire the stock from whence she springs. But as her bad mother and brother are dead, I see no particular objection to the match. It is your *mother's* consent, not *mine*, you must ask."

"I am sure of that," said Henry; "she will be only too glad to see me happy."

In due time the young folks were married, and half the town assembled to witness the double wedding; and there was such eating and drinking, and laughing and dancing, and singing, as had not been heard of in the island for half a century; and old Levi was not there to mar the mirth. The fright he got during the action brought on a fit of apoplexy, of which he died, and the townspeople congratulated themselves upon his departure, repeating to one another the well-known text: "Where there is no tale-bearer the strife ceases."

Before the nine days' wonder was over, or Richard

Redpath's wooing was forgotten, it was followed by another wedding; and his brother Robert led to the altar Mrs. Lucinda Westfall, who, tired of carrying on a complicated business in her own name, followed the old Jew's advice, and took to herself a *Sleeping Partner*.

THE END.

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